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THE INNER LIFE

JOHN G. ADAMS D.D.

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THE INNER LIFE.

*THOUGHTS AND THEMES TO AID
AND STRENGTHEN IT.*

BY
Greene
JOHN G. ADAMS, D.D.
=

"He that believeth hath the witness in himself." — *1 John v. 10.*

"God grant you to be strengthened with might by his spirit in
the inner man." — *Eph. iii. 16.*

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To My Wife:

COMPANION AND HELPER IN THE CHRISTIAN
SERVICE AND LIFE.

"There is a religion behind all religions, and happy is the man who knows it in these days of materialism and atheism."—MAX MÜLLER.

"The thing we are apt to fail of to-day is not breadth and thoroughness of knowledge of what is about us, but of what is above and within us."—REV. T. T. MUNGER, "Freedom of Faith," p. 53.

"What is it, that I, as to my person, have lived here or there, or done this or that? It is the journeys the soul has made, the altars it has built, and the inscriptions it has written thereon, which constitute a life."—MRS. H. C. McCABE.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a twofold life for us all, the inward and the outward. That the outward be right and true, the inward must be. Here is just where Christian instruction begins with man, by enlisting his heart,— his affections; putting them in tune, that the true life shall be given out from them. Being born again, born from above, renewed by heavenly love, all this implies rightness at heart. The Christian is in reality what his inner life makes him. He may appear to men in one aspect, and to God entirely in another. If there is to be a good and strong life-work done, there must be a strong life-power within to render this work actual, continual, and effective. If the Golden Rule is to be observed, it will not be by any ordinary cleverness of the individual, any contentedness with a kind of average piety and benevolence which may be natural to the soul without much extra exercise or striving. You must have a living, wakeful, watchful, prayerful soul

to do that, or it will not be done. It was with this inner life that Jesus had most to do. It is more than anything else insisted upon in the New Testament. “We know that he abideth in us by the spirit which he hath given us.”

The reader will note in these pages very plain indications of the theological opinions and connections of the writer; but also, it is hoped, some good measure of that charity ever in readiness to accept and give out the benediction, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

That those who consult these few pages may be directed to the attainment and enjoyment of the “eternal life” in Christ, is the earnest prayer of the writer.

J. G. A.

MELROSE HIGHLANDS, MASS.,
December 1, 1883.

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THE INNER LIFE.

SUNDAY WORSHIP AND EVERY-DAY LIFE.

Oh, ever with the opening dawn
May saintly purity attend !
Faith sanctify the mid-day hours ;
Upon our souls no night descend !

BREVIARY.

IT was a devout prayer of the psalmist David, at a certain time when calamity had overtaken him, and he remembered his seasons of inspiration and joy in the services of the Temple,—“ My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee; to see thy power and glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.”¹

It long since passed into a proverb that we never know the worth of our blessings till we realize the loss of them; that “our mercies brighten as they take their flight.” The services of the Temple had been one of the highest enjoyments of the Psalmist. Now he was desti-

¹ Ps. lxiii. 1, 2.

tute of these in calamity, and hungered for that which would supply the want. He found in his experience that these seasons of rapturous nearness to heaven did not remain. They were often transient, ending with the occasion which awakened them, and leaving the mind to which they had ministered to relapse into worldliness, forgetfulness, error, and sin. But for this he might not now have realized this sense of desititution.

Do we not in this experience of David read somewhat of our own ? Do we not all remember seasons when in our public religious exercises it seemed that the worth of God's truth and our life in it were brought with such an irresistible power upon us, that we have been ready to say, "Lord, we believe ; help thou our unbelief ! How shall we doubt thy word ? how henceforth fail to delight in thy testimonies ?" But the occasions pass, the worship-seasons end, and back again we have fallen into the influences adverse to Christian devotion and life,—while all this time the great and unalterable claims of Heaven upon us are the same, and while we know they must be evermore. These considerations may serve to impress us with the instructive truth, that the religion of the Christian

sanctuary service should be also the religion of every-day life.

Look at the order of our Sunday Christian service. Its principal observances are, Reading of the Scriptures, the Hymn of Praise, the Prayer, the Sermon, and the Benediction. Each exercise has its signification, and all the services combined have their salutary effect on the devout and listening mind. And as they are instituted and observed that they may go further than the time and occasion that called them forth; as the intent of their moral impression is the spiritual improvement of mortals in all days and under all circumstances,—we may very clearly see the great significance of the Christian life by an embodiment of it under each and all of the forms just alluded to. Let us consider—

1. That our daily life should be a Consultation of the Scriptures. When the Divine Word which they contain speaks to us as we consult their pages in the Christian sanctuary ; when it there opens before us its grand and striking evidences of the wisdom, power, and glory of God, — we cannot fail to see, as we give our attention to its teachings, its perfect adaptedness to our nature ; to our moral capacities, desires, and aspirations. Its impressive and wonderful

histories, its lofty imagery, its apt parables, its sublime prophecies, its matchless precepts, and "exceeding great and precious promises," — all seem to us to stand in the light of a higher wisdom than that of man, and to afford us that refreshment and strength which we feel that the soul needs through all the mysterious manifestations of its being. We have, as the ministries of this Word have dropped upon our hearts, been arrested, enlightened, corrected, improved, consoled, and blest.

Now we should understand that these ministries of the Scriptures are for every day and hour. They do not change when we meet them elsewhere; nor is their importance lessened in the least degree when we seek their wisdom on other days than Sunday. This Bible is our daily directory ; often should we have it before us for reference, as the navigator would his chart and compass, the merchant his day-book, the architect his plan. What we hear from it in the sanctuary will hold good when we find it elsewhere on the same page or in the same expression. Though our interest in it may change, this Word will not. It can know no change. Though heaven and earth pass away, it shall endure while its Author is true and

immutable, and our nature needs his teaching and his care. We may have this Word with us wherever we go, and always find in it the very direction and support we need. The Bereans of old were esteemed more noble than the Thessalonians, in that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so."¹ They were not satisfied with hearing or reading the Scriptures on public worship-occasions only, but had them at their homes, and there held communion with the Wisdom from above, speaking so fully and freely through them. This was a praise-worthy example, and we shall do well to heed it. No other communications coming to us, no increase of reading matter of a different character, such as is so constantly pouring in upon us in this day, can excuse us for neglect of this supreme companion above all other volumes. Were it the hand-book and heart-book of us all, our most ordinary life would be filled with new attractions, and all its best interests pervaded with the power and the glory of God.

2. Our daily life should be a Hymn of Praise. We all recognize the propriety of this service in the Christian sanctuary. The solemn chant, the

¹ *Acts xvii. 11.*

fervent song, the “spirit-kindling anthem,” all become that day which celebrates the mission as well as the resurrection of him whose advent to our earth was heralded by the songs of angels. The sentiment of every soul when lifted heavenward by such a temple service is that of the Psalmist: “Praise God in his sanctuary ; praise him in the firmament of his power ; praise him for his mighty acts ; praise him according to his excellent greatness ; praise him with psaltry and harp ; praise him with stringed instruments and organs ! Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord !”

The all-pervading beneficence of God is a perpetual call to cheerful devotion. If there are frownings in his providence, the smiles of his grace are seen also ; if clouds and darkness, gleamings and the clear shining of that righteousness and judgment in which his throne hath endurance and glory. Hopelessness and sinking of the heart, in view of his government and dispensations, may come where faith in his providence is narrow or dim, and the evil is seen to be more powerful than the good ; when to the anxious vision, salvation seems but

“to the few confined,
And heaven too narrow to contain mankind.”

But such is not that representation which the Gospel unfolds. That is a revelation of joy “unspeakable and full of glory;” and whenever we contemplate its vast means and ends, we shall find reason for highest thanksgiving and praise, because its means and ends are worthy of a God of infinite wisdom and love.

But this hymning of the praises of God need not be confined to the Sunday sanctuary exercises. It may become a life-service also of the Christian believer. In Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress” we are told of the hospitalities offered to Christian on his experimental journey, at one of his tarrying places. “The pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sun-rising. The name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang.” And one of our own poets, in an admirable notice of this passage, concludes *his* song with the Christian desire,—

“ Be called my chamber Peace, when ends the day ;
And let me with the dawn, like Pilgrim, sing and pray.”

But not in the fresh morning-time only may this music of the soul find utterance. It may go up from us through the day. It may not be uttered in words; may not break out in the harmonious strains of voice or instrument. It may be better

than either. It is that inward unison of the soul that can make music for us wherever the place of our mortal sojourning may be. It can send up its praises and hallelujahs from the dustiest highway, from the obscurest sick-room, from the deepest dungeon, from the busiest and noisiest throng, or from that silence and sadness which reign at the bedside of the dying or at the door of the tomb. It comes of the consciousness of duty done, of acquiescence in the divine will, of devotion to the constant and living service of the Father of all. It softens many a harsh strain, drowns many a discord, makes smoothness through many a rough passage of human experience. It is the grand hymn constantly chanted, the holy anthem ever going up from the soul at peace with itself and with heaven.

3. Our daily life should also be a Prayer. The service of prayer in the Christian sanctuary is justly regarded as one of the indispensables there. Assembled numbers thus express their acknowledgement to the Infinite One, and implore his aid in their weakness, and his supply of their wants. The petition to "Our Father who art in heaven," is never more appropriate than in such seasons when we would signify our dependence upon him for "life and breath and all

things." But this very prayer, or any prayer which we may justly offer for the common blessings of life, needs to have no exclusive locality for its utterance. Each day of life demands it as much as any Sabbath hour. If God lived and wrought for us only on this first day of the week, then might our prayers to him be confined to that day ; but it is he who constantly upholds us, and reveals to us his glory,— a power and glory the same as that which the word of the sanctuary announces and unfolds. "Give us *this day* our daily bread," is a petition appropriate not only in the pulpit and pews, but at the family altar, and at the table of our common providential supply each day. There should be home-prayers as well as church-prayers, secret as well as public, daily as well as weekly ones. We need more prayers in the domestic circle, in the closet of the heart, in our daily intercourse with the world, in all the endeavors and through all the accomplishments of life. True prayer is the soul's sustenance. It cannot really know God without it, and cannot with it fail of knowing him,— something of him, for its light and strength and peace.

But that life may be a prayer, we should understand the great import of this service. It

is devotion; it is action. To ask is not all. There should be corresponding exertion, when exertion is possible. Seeking and finding, as well as asking and receiving, are in the lesson of Jesus. The prayer of words may be sincere, but it may be followed by no attempt in work to give these words significance and power; or it may be ceremonial mainly. He who would truly ask for life's blessings must be willing to take that course which, under the wise and immutable laws of heaven, will secure them. "Pray without ceasing" is another form of expression, including such direction as this: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." To pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," and then to run voluntarily into the way of both, is but mockery and shame. To ask "Forgive us, O Lord, our sins," and still to retain the unforgiving spirit, is the same. To plead "Give us daily bread," and then to indulge in indolence, hath no countenance, no approval of heaven. The whole life-prayer should be service to truth and the right. Strive for that which you are asking of God.

"Brother, kneeling late and early,
Never working, praying ever,
Up and labor; work is prayer,
Worship is the best endeavor."

4. Our daily life should also be a Sermon. The discourse in the Christian sanctuary-service is, or should be, a plain, practical enforcement of the truth of God in reference to life. It should have its proofs and illustrations ; its consistency, thoroughness, completeness ; its unction, too, in the heavenly spirit that pervades it. So should our whole life be thus an expositor of the salutary and mighty power of God's Word.

There are two senses in which we should make life a sermon. One is, in seeking, through all its presentations to us, in all its experiences, constant self-instruction and improvement. The other is, in making this life so impressive that others may be blest in their knowledge of it. Life is a school, and we are here to be learners in it. God, in his greatness and goodness, is constantly teaching us. That thought of the poet, that we may find

“Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything,”

is in accordance with what we are saying. Every day is to us, if we attend to it, a sermon ; every object of creation, a living text, from which there ray out in every direction the luminous truth and beauty, the wisdom, skill, and goodness of the

Eternal Source. Sunlight, rain-drop, cloud and wind, vale and mountain, field and forest, sea and shore,—all speak to us the Great Original. Our common supplies proclaim his impartial goodness, in that universal language heard beyond all creeds, saying “God is love,” whatever the theologies of the world may affirm. And in our daily walks, and in his dealings with us,—whether prosperous or adverse as we use these sayings,—we still may learn of God, and make ourselves wise in the teachings he shall impart. Joys should make us thankful, and woes should humble us; prosperity teach us gratitude, and adversity trustfulness of mind. Our frailties should show us the duty of charity for the faults of others, and amendments of our own; and our whole intercourse with our fellow-men should give us new and higher views of faith and hope, and the love that never faileth.

Then our life will be, must be, read by others. What but a sermon of divine truth should it be? You remember what the early Christian believers are termed by one of their number, “an epistle known and read of all men.”¹ They were; and what evidences of loyalty and true glory do we find in their lives! As ancient Cy-

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 2.

prian wrote, “ We do not speak great things, but live them.”

Our world has had many truthful and instructive discourses, in human experiences which have been revealed to it. What sermons on industry and economy have we in such men as Wesley and Franklin ; of perseverance, in Columbus and Livingstone ; of philanthropy, in Howard, Oberlin, and Wilberforce ; of patriotism, in Leonidas and Washington ; of Christian principle and self-sacrifice, in the great Apostle to the Gentiles ! How these men preach to their fellow-men in all ages and climes ! And far above and beyond all, what a sermon of never-waning strength and grandeur have we in that immaculate life where the image of the Father is seen, “ full of grace and truth ” ! Though his words are with power whenever they come home in their directness to the soul, how greatly is this power enhanced when the fact of his life accompanies them. What a profound and irresistible discoursing is such a life, of the glory of truth and the beauty of holiness ! And how through all time will this appeal stand, to arrest the attention of mankind, turn them “ from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ” !

The glorious Gospel,—which proclaims the

final triumph of righteousness over sin, of good over evil, and the reconciliation of all souls to the beneficent Father,—in its theological presentations, makes its constant and fearless appeals to the reason, the understanding, of mankind. But when the *life*, in accordance with its instructions, is the argument in favor of it, who that sees and knows it can resist its power? It will proclaim itself more impressively than all mere word-utterances that could be made by the tongues of men or of angels. Such representatives of this Gospel, wherever on the earth they may be found, can truthfully take up the strain of the poet:—

“Our harp-notes should be sweeter,
Our trumpet-tones more clear,
Our anthems ring so loudly
That all the world must hear!
Oh, royal be our music,
For who has cause to sing
Like the chorus of redeemed ones,
The children of the King!”

And so let us see in clearest light the teaching of the topics upon which we have now dwelt. Let us aim to have our constant life-service a Prayer of trust, a Consultation of God’s living Word, a Hymn of thanksgiving, a Sermon of truth and righteousness, of love to God and

SUNDAY WORSHIP AND DAILY LIFE. 23

man ; and in all, and through all, and at the end of all, let there be a Benediction of heavenly good-will, saying : “The grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be with us all forever. Amen.”

LIFE A FEAST.

Oh, for fuller life we pine ;
Let us more receive of Thine ;
Still for more on Thee we call,
Thou who fillest all in all !
Live we now in Thee ; be fed
Daily with the living bread.

ANON.

A SIGNIFICANT statement of the Christian life is contained in the similitude used by Jesus : “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son.”¹ Man needs that aliment on which his spirit can feed, and of which his true vitality must be supplied and increased. Apt and instructive statements of Scripture set this forth. In the Old Testament record we hear the divine voice speaking to the subjects of human error and delusion : “ Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? ”² Earnest seeking was there because of human want ; but the good which the seekers required was not found by them. They did not apply to the right sources.

¹ Matt. xxii. 2.

² Isai. lv. 2.

Their soul-feasting was a mockery, as the prophet affirmed: “As when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he waketh, and behold he is faint and his soul hath appetite.” Such were the effects of error, the pursuit of wrong, and indulgence therein. Hence this expostulation of heavenly wisdom. But expostulation is not all. There follow kindly entreaty, heavenly invitation and direction: “Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good; and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”¹

Thus the spiritual blessings in Christ are set forth in the parable of the Marriage Feast. The banquet was prepared; the invitation was sent out,—accepted by the few, by the many rejected; then the consequences of acceptance,—fulness, rest, peace; the doom of those who refused the proffered good,—what the banished from heaven’s truth must find,—“outer darkness,” destitution, affliction. The beautiful parable is one of a series spoken by Jesus in illustration of the excellency of that gift with which he came from the Father to mankind. The feast signifies not only a supply of the natural wants, but a full, a

¹ Isai. lv. 2.

pleasurable supply. There could not be a more significant comparison. It answers to the idea of the Psalmist: "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord; therefore do the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of thy house, and thou shalt make them to drink of the river of thy pleasures."¹ It is not mere spiritual existence that Jesus brings to man, but "life more abundantly." When Paul would endeavor to express the fulness of this blessing, he exclaims: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, unto him be glory in the Church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end."²

Man's life in God's truth, as Jesus reveals and imparts it, constitutes this feast, this fulness. It is the most satisfying, strengthening, and enduring spirituality, "the true God and eternal life" within. Let us note a few of the constituents of this true feast of life in man.

1. Knowledge of God and trust in him. No dispensation like that of the Gospel makes known the divine guardianship, impartial, universal, perfect as it is. And this is the view yet

¹ Ps. xxxvi. 8.

² Eph. iii. 20, 21.

needed in Christendom; for other conceptions of God than those of his paternity abound. The human heart, in its deep and unsatisfied cravings for rest and peace, has been grievously and unspeakably tormented with them. No degree of personal purity has been able to bless the soul truly, while these dark and unpaternal aspects of the Deity were in the soul's view. To talk of submitting to the divine sovereignty and to be reconciled to such confusion has only been the severest mockery of man's reason and holiest affections. The Gospel, instead of being "good news," has contained most terrific intelligence to mortals, and to many a one, as to the gifted Saurin, instead of a perpetual feast of heavenly truth and grace, has been "a mortal poison," diffusing itself through all life's experiences, and rendering existence itself "a cruel bitter." Hence the need of showing men what God is, that knowing him they may put their trust in his infinite paternity. What a comment upon Christianity is it, that millions, professing a knowledge of its sublime doctrines, should find some of them so revolting as to be explained only on the supposition that hereafter the kindly sympathies, which here cause us to feel so keenly the afflictions of others, will then become so

changed as to find reconciliation, and pleasure even, in view of endless woes inflicted upon the irreclaimable outcasts from God's presence and love! A meagre feast must life be at times under such appalling contemplations!

Life, then, needs trust in God,—true and strong trust. And this means something more, something higher and stronger, than a mental conclusion that he is adequate to all our wants and weaknesses, and that whether we are obedient or disobedient, morally wakeful or drowsy, faithful or unfaithful, his grace is sufficient for us. This is indeed the lowest order of trust; and we are thankful that the weakest creature of humanity has it, when all other trusts fail, to awaken him to moral life and to duty. But I speak now of a higher trust, one that implies intrenchment in principle, self-reliance, a good conscience, the conviction that God's ways are righteous, and that only in conformity to them can moral safety be found,—heavenly elevation and rest. Talk not of life as a feast to him who has not confidence enough in his own sincere and good intentions to have confidence in God; who must know that he is false, pretentious, *seeming* to be instead of *being* loyal to right, and ready to follow wherever it leads always. Oh, the lean-

ness and starvation that come of this false-heartedness in man! No external things can compensate for it—no standing, no profession, no word-piety whatever. God is not trusted in, because the soul has not cast itself upon him, and agreed to abide by his Word and run with readiness in his commands. If we would have the true life-feast, we must have a divine and constant trust, such as will enable us to say, in every call, duty, trial, change,—whatever life may bring,—as said the youthful Samuel, who waited day and night in the Temple: “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;” or with the Psalmist: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Though a host should encamp against me, in this will I be confident. In his tabernacle shall he hide me.” Such is the highest life, such the soul’s banqueting in the Almighty’s secret pavilion; such the inner and enduring life of him who said once to human weakness and distrust, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

2. Spiritual growth and improvement are implied in this life-feast. What can we make of ourselves? This is the main question of life. Powers are given us, not to hold merely but to improve. If we do not improve them, then we

are suffering loss with them. Life's greatness is measured by our means of realizing and enjoying it. We have the privilege of putting ourselves upon interest. How large shall the percentage be? That depends upon our use of the principle. The parable of the Talents tells us that. Woe to him who hides his in the earth! Blessing for him who uses and improves the smallest that may be given him! He shall in nowise lose his reward. In this work of self-making, self-growth, accumulation, improvement, all life's realities may aid us. The smallest work we have to do, if a duty, may have God's aid and blessing in it. Prosperity may make us grateful, trial and affliction bring us that discipline through which the soul most bowed and humbled often passes into higher and higher realms of contemplation and assurance, into grander fields of spiritual experience and enjoyment. Fulness comes of faithfulness. Thus can the soul be multiplying its inward resources, and in the midst of the world's leanness and want find — what the Word assures us are ever at God's right hand, where his true and chosen have their portion — "fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore." "The object of life," says Goethe, "is life itself. If we but do our duty

to our own minds, we shall soon come to do it to the world."

3. Beneficent action is another constituent of this life-feast. To live harmless is not the whole of life. To be useful is one of its chief blessings and ends. "No man liveth unto himself." No man should be a drone in this vast hive of humanity. He has a work to do *with* others and *for* them. As freely as he has received, so freely should he give. God delights in communicating good, and thus we are directed and encouraged to be his children. No luxury life affords is like that of beneficent action. Heaven is made joyous because of the errands of mercy and love upon which its angels are permitted to go abroad through all God's realms.

But this beneficent action often involves sacrifice. There are duties meeting us which as often as they come impose on us self-denial, and in which we may make ourselves really heroic and noble. Bereavements sadden our spirits, vexations provoke us, labors oppress, and watchings weary us. Bearing these meekly and firmly is a part of the highest life we can realize here. This experience may not be known to the world: it is none the less acceptable to God and blessed to man. And not a little of this heroism may

there be in our most ordinary life. Some one has said that "the daily sacrifices of a laboring-man to duty may involve more bravery of soul than the achievements of patriots and heroes; and the devotion of an unlettered girl, comforting through years the bed-ridden winter of a parent's age, may contain a holier martyrdom than any which the Church has canonized or glorified." To lighten the burdens of others; to bear our testimony in our ready word or action against wrong; to refuse to follow the multitude to do evil; to say *no* with a firm voice, from conviction of God's right, when most others are readiest to say *yes*,—or *yes*, when they are most loudly clamoring *no*; to obey the heavenly call through evil and good report,—in all these experiences there is something else than mere ease of mind or luxury of sense. There is resolute, earnest, persistent action, downright work,—work which we are sacredly bound to do, and which will abundantly remunerate the doer. And he who enters upon it with readiness and perseverance will find, in many an hour of life, his darkness light, and his dishonor glory in the Lord. Whatever waste or want there may be at other daily life-repasts, his shall be a feast of heavenly fulness and joy.

4. Faith in the soul's immortality is the crowning blessing of this feast,— faith that sees the good in the present as a blessed indication of what the future shall be. If “men did eat angels’ food,” as one of the Scripture writers calls the giving of the manna to Israel, so do they in this contemplation of the glorious life to come. This life-feast, however sumptuous in other supplies, will utterly fail to give the soul fulness, if this assurance of the future is left out of it. Its highest joy comes in the conviction,—

“I feel my immortality o’ersweep
All pains, all groans, all griefs, all fears, — and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth, Thou livest forever.”

Nor is this all, as the poet has spoken it. This immortality is the common blessing of the race—spiritual uprising, change, renewal, perfection.

What of this life-feast are we in readiness to enjoy? Diogenes, reprimanding a youth for wasting time at a Bacchanalian feast, inquired, “Dost thou know, boy, that to the good man every day is a festival?” What heathenism could thus conceive of, Christianity verifies. As the renowned Chrysostom, in his comments on the words of Paul, said: “Let us keep the feast [the Christian Passover or Communion] not

with the old leaven of unrighteousness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. . . . Therefore the present time is a feast-time, for when he says, ‘Let us keep the feast,’ he does not say this because it was then Easter or Whitsuntide, but to show that all times are feast-times for Christians, in virtue of the superabundance of the blessings imparted to them.”

In seeking the best of life in its material or earthly forms merely, the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes sums up the mournful result: “Therefore I hate life, because that the work wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”¹ If we consult one of the most gifted of poets, we read,—

“The spider’s most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man’s tender tie
Of earthly bliss ; it breaks at every breeze.”

“I once attempted,” said Byron, “to enumerate the happy days I had lived,— which might, according to the common use of language, be called happy. I could not make them count more than eleven, and I believe I have a pretty distinct account of every one. I often ask myself, whether, between the present time and the day

¹ Eccl. i. 14.

of my death, I shall be able to make up the round dozen." On the morning of the day previous to the death of Talleyrand, a paper was found on the night-table, near his bed, on which he had thus written : "Behold eighty-three years passed away. What cares, what agitation, what anxiety, what ill-will, what sad complications! And all without other result except great fatigue of body and mind, and disquiet with regard to the past, and a profound sentiment of discouragement and despair with regard to the future!" A mournful confession indeed for one who died possessed in abundance of this world's wealth, and of all the earthly honors which the sovereigns of Europe could bestow.

What mean these utterances ? Why, that life is not life considered simply as a pleasure, a round of dissipation, a gain of material good only, balanced against the spiritual aspiration, toil, strife, and discipline which most souls need to make them healthful, strong, and free. "My world has been very beautiful and my life happy," said a dying young man, who had been stricken down by a mysterious disease with fairest worldly prospects before him, shut up for years in the chamber of suffering, helpless and blind ! Oh, the compensations of Christian truth and faith,

the grandeur of that vision which sees Him who is invisible!

Life is great ; all human life is, from its origin, its dependencies, its connections with the past, the present, and the future. We talk, sometimes, of periods in time, of days of special interest,—birthdays, Christmas, the closing of the Old or the beginning of the New Year. But where are the periods in this continuous life of ours ; and where are the days that are not special ? What time is greater than to-day, as we stand in God's presence, to hear his voice and to do his holy will ? Is not life always great, and may we not always be true and welcome guests at its holy festival ? Let us ask ; let us determine. The banqueting-room of the Infinite is open. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come ; and whosoever will, let him come !”

WALKING WITH GOD.

No longer would my soul be known
As self-sustained and free ;
Oh, not my own ! oh, not my own !
Lord, I belong to thee !

T. H. GILL.

WHEN we read of early and distinguished patriarchs of our race, as in the instances of Noah and Enoch, that they "walked with God," we perceive their acquaintance with one great want of our nature, and the means of supplying it. Men can no more truly live without God than respiration can be freely carried on without air, or health and vigor continue in the bodily system without suitable food.

The great mistake with many religionists, who profess to believe in God, is, that he is not to them the reality that he should be. He is rather an abstraction,—not near, but afar off; not so much in the present as in the past or future. We should have a clearer conception. While we have such evidences of God's existence as are given us, we are bound to treat the subject of nearness to him—communion with him—as

though it were a reality. It needs to be made a certainty in our conviction. It will, if we have the right measure of faith. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This does not signify a love of abstract truth, right, goodness, but something deeper, more intimate,— a personal attachment to an individual spirit, to an identical being, the Living God ; a tender, confiding love towards our Father, which augments in our souls the love of right and truth and goodness. To love him, we must love his character, must love purity, goodness, and truth ; and with a love of these, must possess in our hearts the consciousness of a friend in whom we may confide, and whose presence will be to us one of the chief lights, supplies, and blessings of our being.

We need to realize that this name, Heavenly Father, signifies all that we can desire of spiritual light, aid, hope, comfort, strength, and peace ; that if we have this Father we may consult him as the child would his near and waiting and provident parent. So speak the olden voices : "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ;" "I have set the Lord always before me ; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved ;" "He that cometh to God must

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.”¹ No lesson is more clearly taught in all the Scriptures than this,—that our great need is a secret soul-piety as well as a religion of outward manifestations, a closet as well as an out-of-door religion, a communion with God as well as a work with mankind. And this is to say, that the power of our religious influence and the essential value of our religious activity will be in proportion to the sincerity and depth of our inward spiritual life. The stream must have its fountain. There must be a supplying and sustaining power behind all these institutions,—churches, ministers, prayers, praises, religious enterprises, and accomplishments, at home, abroad, anywhere in the world. Just so far as there is this inward, hidden force of truth and love, aspiring after the knowledge of God and the inward imbibing and outward diffusion of his spirit, just so far will there be abiding prosperity and strength with Christianity among men, and no farther. Those to whom we are indebted for what we have of truest religious advancement and blessing with our race, have been those living, like the ancient patriarchs, near to God, taking counsel of his Word, com-

¹ Isai. xl. 31; Ps. xvi. 8; Heb. xi. 6.

muning with his spirit, leaning in secret upon his almighty arm, and supplying the pulsations of their own spiritual vitality from the fulness of the Infinite Heart itself. Had not our Noahs and Enochs, our Pauls and Johns, lived of old, we should find deeper darkness than we now do among men. Did we not now have, in some of our churches, at our devotional altars, in the secret paths of life in our world, those who live near God and draw their inward strength from communion with him, our prophecies of greater good in store for man would falter upon our lips, our confidence in what we call our religious prosperity often fail. But of this we feel sure, that God is to be sought and found by his children ; that he will "indeed dwell with men upon the earth," raise them into heavenly places, and impart to them the treasures of his saving grace.

Too many regard this walking with God as a religious rapture or communion which the patriarchs of old could enjoy, but have little or no conception of the absolute nearness of the same God now to them. As James Martineau has so aptly said : "There in old Palestine, we think, the august voice broke for a moment the eternal silence. Had we stood where Moses was, and

travelled at the right hand of Paul, we should have felt as they." This might, or might not, have been. What is our kind and degree of communion with God now? The right answer to this may serve to show what might have been had we lived in those other days of the world's history. God has never spoken to any one of our race in the past more clearly and emphatically than he has "spoken unto us by his Son." He speaks, too, in the same nature, in the same daily providence, in the same accents of heavenly truth and holiness and love. Let us be as true to our lessons from heaven as those old saints (with all their earthly imperfections) were to theirs, and we shall know, as really as they, the mystery of communing with God. Noah was but one of our race. What knew he of God that we may not? Let us search and see.

Walking with God comprehends all that is meant by faith in him. "They that know thy name," says the Psalmist, "will put their trust in thee." And this is ever the great need of our nature. The depths of this trust are unfathomable. It has been the strength of the world's truest and noblest heroes and martyrs in all the past; the comfort of the oppressed and afflicted in every age and place—in Christendom, out of

Christendom. It is able to hope, able to do, able to save to the uttermost, able to withstand a world's opposition to principle,—to take hold upon truth, when its advocacy is weakest with man, and see and feel it conqueror, and more than conqueror, through its Author's omnipotence; to let its footsteps

“ Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath ! ”

The aids of Christian truth are for those who are in any extremity, its comforts for those who are in any trouble. Men often have not that faith in God's promises that they would have in the promises of a good man,—one who had never deceived them, but had always proved himself true in his conduct in reference to the benefit of his fellow-men. Yea, it is strange how ready most men are to think the worst instead of the best of God. How distrustful they are of safety in him. Before we attempted our first ascent of Mount Washington on the railroad, we hesitated; we doubted the safety of the experiment. What if there should be a break in the machinery? What peril to limb and destruction of life might follow! But when we began to make the upward movement so steadily and strong, the cog-wheels in the centre track fitting in with such a firm

grasp upon the solid cross-bars made to receive them, all thoughts of danger vanished, and upward and downward the sense of security was realized by every passenger. The road had been built to meet emergencies, and with every preparation for security which the ingenuity and faithfulness of man could devise. Hence the confidence felt in it. Even so may it be in our trust in the divine beneficence. God's purposes are formed to meet all emergencies. Faith running in the central track of his promises, and laying firm hold on his Word constantly in all life's experiences, can realize the glorious truth of the Psalmist's exclamation, "Safety is of the Lord."

We need this, then, most of all things, a daily life-piety. And this must come not from without but from within. It must have its springs in the soul's secret depths, in its communings with God as with a near and ever constant friend and benefactor. We need to feel that we have not only our worldly, but divine interests; that we belong not only to an earthly, but to a heavenly home; and that we have our business with God each day,—a business which cannot be dispensed with, any more than that of the greatest earthly interest pressing upon us. I know not

where I have seen this subject more impressively illustrated than in a sketch from life, by one of the most distinguished literary men of our nation — the poet, William C. Bryant; a note, by the way, which contains a lesson for us all, beneath the rich coloring which the skilful pen of the author has given it.

The narrator was walking in the late watches of the night, when the stars were yet bright in the heavens, the earth fresh and fragrant with the night-dew, and the great ocean, on whose shore he strayed, pealing its solemn hymn through the star-lit darkness, when he saw this holy scene. “The sound of human voices,” he writes, “drew my attention toward the bank, looking over the verge of which I discovered an elderly man in a rough dress, with a small boy by his side.

“The first words heard from them were in reference to their sudden and early rising. Some duty had been omitted, and they were questioning each other respecting it. There was a pause of a few moments, which the old man broke by saying: ‘We are quite early, and perhaps the duty omitted by us in the house may as well be done here. We will scarcely work the worse for it to-day.’

“The speaker then took off a glazed hat and displayed a head slightly bald. The long, matted hair upon its sides trembled in the slight breeze that set in from the ocean. The younger also laid aside his hat, and both knelt upon the sand. In a solemn tone the father commenced his morning’s devotion. I could not catch all the words, but here and there, when special earnestness marked the request, I could distinctly hear each syllable. The language was simple but expressive; and, as much of it was Scripture, it occasionally rose to sublimity. The daily wants and cares and dangers of the petitioner went up to Him who has taught us to ask day by day our daily bread. And when family and friends had been commended to Him who careth for all, the humble worshippers rose from their knees, and launched their boat for a craft lying at some distance from the shore. Other ears than mine heard the prayer of the old pilot; and whatever fate might be his, we could not doubt he would be prepared to meet it as a willing and confiding believer in the gracious God of all.”

Does this narrative seem an attractive and pleasing one? Something like its equally beautiful reality may be ours each day. Though we kneel not where the old boatman did before the

day-dawn, we may find that same God wherever day comes to us,—at our bedside or table, wheresoever our daily thought and toiling shall begin. Let us find him; and in our conversation and example each day, let reverence for his name and character be in our hearts, and consciousness of his nearness and guidance be our inspiration and strength. So shall we gain new vigor for our walk with God, and for the work of salvation with our fellow-men.

THE WITNESS WITHIN.

But not alone Thy care we claim,
Our wayward steps to win ;
We know Thee by a dearer name, —
O Love of God within !

ELIZA SCUDDER.

THE Samaritan woman, who met Jesus at Jacob's Well, immediately after her interview with him there, hurried to the city where she dwelt, with her wonderful account of the new teacher. He had revealed to her his knowledge of the very secrets of her life. Was not this the Messiah ?

A number of those to whom she thus appealed went out of the city and came to Jesus. Their personal interview with him convinced them far more deeply as to his character than the narrative of the woman had done. Graciously acceding to their request that he would tarry with them, he and his disciples abode there two days. His personal intercourse with them doubtless had its influence afterwards, when conversions among the Samaritans were so notable. "Now," say they to the woman, "we

believe, not because of thy saying ; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”¹ This experience of the Samaritans with their holy visitor suggests this thought : Personal spiritual nearness to Christ, the surest and safest witness to the truth of his religion.

What others know of Christianity may not profit us. While they are enjoying the light of life, we may be walking in darkness. That which we know is ours. So far as we have personal exercise of our own souls with the power of Christian truth, in so far are we justified in declaring such testimony to others ; and so much the more valuable has this testimony become. Too many have their theology and religion at second-hand — have it in a minister, or in a creed, or in a sect, or in a Bible which they seldom consult. And many such pretend to have their own opinions on theology and religion, when their opinions are borrowed. They have not true Christian personality.

Knowledge of Christ, as the New Testament explains it, is living faith in him, communion with him in spirit, nearness to him. Nominally Christ is known wherever the Bible has found its

¹ John iv. 42.

way among men and its Gospel has been proclaimed. Really and practically he is known only to those "who hear the Word of God and keep it." Let us note, then, the importance of the great experimental evidence of the religion of Christ. Of all the evidences presented in the New Testament, or in the defences of Christianity which have been written by its most able apologists and supporters, none is of paramount importance to this. It goes further than all the others, and confirms them. It is something of a different and higher kind, increasing the persuasion of the truth to those in possession of other arguments, and supplying their place to those who are not.

There is an old medical preparation, which has been highly prized in certain cases, said to have been invented in the most ancient days of Rome. It is called Mithridates, and is said to be a preventive against poisons. It has, of course, passed through many hands since it first came into use; and some sceptical person, if he were offered the medicine or had been asked to recommend it, might be disposed to question the statement as to the origin of it, and conclude that, as now vended, it had passed through so many hands before it had reached his, that no depend-

ence could be placed on it, and that it might as well be rejected at once and altogether from the list of remedies. But of how little account would such objection be in the estimation of him who could in truth reply: "I have made trial of this medicine, and have found it effectual, in case of a disease that threatened my life, when all other means failed. As to the historical objections to the use of it, I know little or nothing. This I know, that I was apparently near to death; I took the medicine, and it restored me to health and soundness."

Now Christianity is the medicine for curing the moral disorders with which a sick humanity is afflicted, and Christ is the administering physician. Faith in him is the antidote of sin,—and its dire consequence, the spiritual death which comes of sin. The work effected by this faith is restoration to spiritual health, the love of Christ shed abroad in the soul, love of truth, righteousness, holiness. It is the spirit of God reigning within. And it is thus that Christianity is most clearly and undeniably proved by its effect on human conduct and life.

These statements are corroborated by the testimony of Christ and his apostles. Here is the test which the Master gives of his religion,

the most perfect answer that can be given to its claims: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."¹ Imposture here is defied. Truth in its demonstration stands forth. History might be darkened; logic might perplex or mislead, rhetoric dazzle and bewilder, appeals to the passions deceive. Living fact could not. Such fact is in the mind of the apostle, when he so forcibly encourages and sustains his brethren in their Christian life: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear son;" "Such were some of you [adulterers, thieves, covetous, &c.]; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God."² These were wonderful changes. They were known and understood; and appeals to the mind on the strength of them were the most effectual which it was possible for the apostle himself to make in his communications to his brethren and to the world around him.

Note, now, the especial benefits of this personal evidence of the truth of Christianity.

¹ John vii. 17.

² Eph. ii. 1; Col. i. 13; 2 Cor. vi. 11.

1. It is the only proof coming alike to the great multitudes of mankind. Of the external evidences of Christianity all may not be able to judge correctly. This internal evidence is level to all. The Gospel is for the unenlightened as well as for the learned and wise. A poor slave was ridiculed by his master for being so religious. "What good does religion do you, Pompey?" asked the master. "It makes my soul happy," was the simple reply. "You foolish thing," said the master, "you have no soul." "Then — then, massa, it makes my body happy." Soul or body, there was delight in it. That was experimental. This perception is realized "by saint, by savage, and by sage," wherever the principles of Christianity are received in the heart and made the directors of the moral actions.

2. This evidence grows. Once really planted in the soul, it will germinate and expand. It will advance with our knowledge of God, our love to Christ, our victory over sin, our watching and prayerfulness, our spiritual tastes, habits, and joys. Other evidences may sometimes get obscured and dim, but there is a constant renewal here. It is what Jesus would have the Samaritan woman understand, — "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

3. It is the most satisfactory of all evidences. The persuasion from historical and internal evidence of the Christian revelation may produce a human faith, may silence objections from without, may prove negatively that man could not have invented the Gospel, may establish the abstract excellency of its founder, its doctrines, precepts, and tendencies. But these conclusions may be lifeless and uninfluential till the affections are reached and warmed by God's love,—till the inward testimony of the Gospel, from its surprising glory and heavenly effects upon the whole character, is added to all the others. It is then that these others kindle into life, have freshness and vigor and beauty and power.

This evidence, we say, is the most satisfactory. A blessing we have once experienced is not to be reasoned out of us; any more than that realized by the man born blind, who had been cured by Jesus, was to be reasoned out of him. The scorning Pharisee would browbeat him with the accusation against Jesus, “We know that this man is a sinner.” The calm reply was, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see!”¹ Although for his persistence in recognizing and

¹ John ix. 25.

praising his benefactor he was cast out of the synagogue, yet this cured blind-one has been a personal witness to the healing power of Christ down to this day. He had an experience of the divine mercy, such as has led thousands of others in every century since to feel what the poet has so significantly written :—

“ Oh, that all the blind but knew him,
And would be advised by me ;
Surely they would hasten to him,
He would cause them all to see ! ”

4. Again, this evidence is the one most needed with all men everywhere. It has been too much the practice to make the subject of the Christian evidences an intellectual disquisition mainly, a matter of argument on external testimonies. Just and requisite as this may be in its place, it is not sufficient to impel the heart to the love and work of Christ’s religion. The adversary of Christianity is not to be beaten by weapons like these. Human reasonings, plausibly stated theories, may satisfy the understanding, but not enlist the soul. We must have this true and only unquestionable experience of the Christian, a knowledge of God’s nearness to us, and his life in us, by the spirit he has given us, as we have

sought to do his work and will. Love, mercy, humility, patience, hope, and persevering faith in goodness and truth,—these are the evidences which will speak with effect where others might be unavailable—speak for the genuineness and excellency of true Christianity, while the world may be wondering that such dishonesties, frauds, and corruptions are committed by those who have taken shelter and sought sanction under its holy name. This personal Christ-power men can, will, and must comprehend.

Here, then, is one door of evidence plainly open to us all, as we consult the teaching of the New Testament, “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.” What have you done, dear reader, to make the two grand requirements of Christianity, love to God and love to man, an experience of your soul, the habitual desire and action of your life? You will not pretend that you have known of any better religion than this. And whether this is a failure or not, you can never know for yourself until you have personally made the experiment. Until you have, do not heed sceptics, fault-finders, speculators, drifters, denouncers. Try the *specific*, and see what its effect upon your spiritual nature will be. Whatever the experiences of others may be, let

us heed the lesson contained in the words of the ancient Samaritans: "For we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

SAINTS AND SAINTSHIP.

For all thy saints, O God,
Who strove in Christ to live,
Who followed him, obeyed, adored,
Our grateful hymn receive.

ANCIENT HYMNS.

SAINTS are not myths. They have lived in the past, and are living now. That there may be saints in the immortal state is not generally a subject of doubt among Christians ; but saintship is usually considered as pertaining rather to a higher state than to that which mortals enjoy.

There is a ceremony of canonization in the Romish Church, by which persons deceased are placed in the catalogue of the saints. It succeeds beatification. The spirit is believed to rise from this to a higher state, in consequence of certain proceedings of the Church upon the earth in its behalf. This rite resembles much the *apotheosis*, or deification, of the ancient Romans, and in all probability had its rise therein. One consideration in connection with this rite is quite significant of that kind of saintship which keeps itself

so far away from the present, and has so much less to do with the earthly than with the heavenly state. We refer to a maxim in regard to canonization in the Romish Church, that the Church shall not enter into inquiries with a view to canonization, until fifty years, at least, after the death of the person to be canonized. There is quite too much of such saintship in both Catholic and Protestant churches. But it is not the saintship which the New Testament recognizes, and unto which Christianity is constantly calling us. That is a saintship resolving itself into the living present, and working out its power in the midst of a needy and living world — a saintship which means not only glorified angels, or men long since gone from earth, but all of us who at this hour inherit mortal life, and have bodies and spirits with which to glorify the God of our life and salvation.

True Christian saintship implies reverence and love for God, piety in principle; piety — another word which has been as vague in respect to meaning as that of saint. It is a compound for veneration and affection for the God and Father of all. To know the brotherhood we must know aright the Fatherhood. An Atheist might, according to all good use of language, be chided

for calling man brother, because he questions the paternity of the creator of the race. We cannot have the most effective philanthropy without just conceptions of what God is. We need to see the Father as Jesus reveals him, as Christian apostles have made their representations of his grace and truth to our minds, and as the human soul, when it most knows its own wants, hungers and thirsts for him. The most godlike are those most fitted to be saints ; and it is this saintship that we are called upon in the Gospel to possess and enjoy.

This saintship implies loyalty to Christ. "Saints in Christ Jesus" is the New Testament definition. There may be other saintly ones among all religionists ; God forbid that we should think of doubting this ; but Christian saintship is that above or beyond which no other can reasonably be preferred, because it has in itself all the essentials of a true life-power. The great intent of God with man, the highest moral precepts lived out into perfect life, the clearest light of the immortal existence, come through Christ for all the ages. A world full of "saints in Christ Jesus" can bring as perfect a world to us as any religious sect in its farthest outlook would hope or pray for.

This saintship also implies a sincere and constant devotion to human good. The second commandment is said to be like the first. Both are inseparably joined. He who would give evidence of his love to God has one proof among the best he can offer, taught him in the New Testament,—love to his neighbor and brother: “For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”¹ History assures us that among the early Christians this lesson of heavenly truth was well learned, and wrought out in corresponding works. The testimony of an enemy gives evidence of this. The Emperor Julian, uneasy and vexed with the charities of the Christians, gives this instruction to one of his Pagan priests: “Establish hospitals in every town, for the care of the sick and the entertainment of strangers, and for extending the cares of humanity to all that are poor. I will furnish the means. For it is a shame for us that no Jew ever begs, and that the impious Galileans should not only keep their own poor, but even many of ours whom we leave to suffer.” Of the Christian Emperor Constantine afterwards it is written—in justice to his sincerity, too, we have reason to believe—that

¹ 1 John iv. 20.

"he poured out his alms liberally, both upon Christian and Pagan. To the public beggars he gave both food and clothing; he assisted generously those who had fallen from a better condition, giving to some pensions, to others lucrative offices. He took especial care of widows and orphans, giving their daughters to rich men whom he knew to be worthy."

Such was primitive Christianity in its humane activities. And admiration for this work of love has never ceased in our world. God be thanked for what we realize of a growing and increasing saintship in this direction in Christendom. Our Christian charities are everywhere multiplying; charities which include the welfare of the stricken, needy, and afflicted of our race—the blind, the dumb, the insane, the idiotic, the aged and infirm, the sick and destitute, the inebriate, the fallen outcast, and all the debased of our common humanity. All this is a work born of no paganism, nor of any heathen or worldly philosophy, or blazing fanaticism, burning for a season only to consume itself. It comes of that Christianity which recognized in some good measure the interest of the Divine Parent in his children, and the great mission of mercy and salvation upon which Christ came into the world.

While we rejoice in these manifestations, we cannot shut our eyes to the great need of an increase of this philanthropic work among Christians. There has often been among the sects more effort to define creeds than to befriend and dignify humanity, more reliance on human learning than in human affection, more confidence in the letter than in the spirit of God's truth. This order ought to be changed, and must be, ere true saints will increase and "judge the world," as the New Testament declares, and bless it with their ministries of love and heaven.

Once more: this saintship implies true convictions of a heavenly citizenship. The true Christian saint is "in one world, and hath another to attend him." He has interests and fellowships here and now,—interests and fellowships that reach "beyond the veil" which hides the earthly from the heavenly, and which find their answering only in that which is immortal. It is this verity which speaks out of the heart of Christian trust: "We look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at those which are unseen and eternal." And this look of the believer is a hopeful one for himself and for his race. It sees the Divine Reconciler of all things

to God, whether they be things in the earthly state or in any heavenly realm or dominion. His Saviour is Lord of this world and the next, “ who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.”¹

“ Saints in Christ Jesus ” are needed, or the New Testament would not call thus *for* them nor *upon* them : Christlike spirits, believing and confiding in God and his Word, having large and comprehensive views of his divine administration,—believing, too, in man, and the possibilities of his spiritual progress now and evermore. The world has been blest with such, and still needs to be ; and without this blessing our Christianity with men is but little else than a name.

All sects have their saints. But all of them need a greater number, for their own blessing and for the world’s good. This, however, let us know, that this saintship will not come at once. There is no short process, no modern invention by which we may reach it. It grows of Christian light and self-discipline,— of consultation with God, with Christ, with goodness everywhere. In this growth we may all have some goodly share, and thus, through all our earthly experiences, be

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10.

raised to realize the unspeakable blessing, that of being “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”¹

¹ Col. i. 12.

JESUS THE MORNING STAR.

THE Revelator John, in one of his visions at Patmos, represents Jesus as speaking of himself: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."¹ He was the Messiah predicted by the Hebrew prophets. He was, in the line of Jewish genealogy, the son of David. But how the root as well as the offspring? Thus: Christ is the head of humanity. Although the offspring of David according to the flesh, he is also Lord of the race, and this entitles him to the appellation Lord, applied by the Psalmist-King to the Messiah whom he foretold. He is the spiritual life or root of humanity, as well as the offspring of David.

He affirms of himself, also, "I am the bright and morning star." Instruction and inspiration are to be found in this beautiful similitude. We are reminded by it of the special attractiveness of Jesus. The morning star, by its peculiar lustre, is an object of attraction to every eye, and

¹ Rev. xxii. 16.

has been, in every age, known and distinguished under various names. Among the ancient heathen, when seen in the west as the evening star, it was known as Hesperus; and thence from its name, Vesperus, gave title to those *vespers*, or evening songs and devotions of the Romish Church, which began as its light appeared. No eye, in civilized or savage lands, however unacquainted with the heavens, probably ever failed of noticing it, and its pure and full light has caused it to be known and named by those who could call none other of the starry host by name, as well as by those familiar with the names of all. Richly emblematic is this of Jesus Christ. Among the hosts of the wise and great of the past, who have been indeed the luminaries of the ages, he is pre-eminent in brightness. He is known not only to the learned but to the unlearned. Christ! Volume after volume has been written, controversy after controversy held upon this theme. "What think ye of Christ?" has been a question uppermost in the minds of multitudes of the most intelligent and earnest of men in every age, since the advent of this wonderful one to our world. And to-day the subject is as vividly attractive as at any time in the past. From every conceivable

standpoint men are surveying this luminary,—from Christian, heathen, and pagan sides, through atheistic, pantheistic, theistic, rationalistic instruments, as the inclination of the beholders may be. It is because the pre-eminent light *is there*, and will be as the ages move on, and because of the inquiries which its nature and position in the spiritual heavens so inevitably call forth. There is but one Christ; there never has been. Well sang the poet Watts of this similitude :—

“ Is he a star ? He breaks the night,
Piercing the shades with dawning light ;
I know his glories from afar,
I know the bright, the morning star.”

This star, too, is the precursor of the day. At the time of the advent of Jesus, “ darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.”¹ Men were ignorant of God,—of themselves, their duties and destiny. It was in the midst of this darkness that the new light arose. It indicated day, a new day—a day of light and splendor, such as man had never seen. It was God’s day—the day of his reign on earth through his chosen and anointed one. It was

¹ Isai. lx. 2.

the day which Paul at Athens announced—“a day in the which he will judge [rule, govern] the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead.”¹ As soon as this light began to shed itself upon the nations, there came new views of God to them. The Creator and Ruler was transformed into the Father, and man was taught his true relations to his brother-man; duty was seen to be the highest privilege, and love the highest life of the soul; immortality became a clearer conviction than ever, and earth and heaven were made one. As this day advances the world becomes more enlightened and blest. The work of Christ to be accomplished in it shall be completed. In the expressive words of the elder Ballou:—

“As night before the rays
Of morning flees away,
Sin shall retire before the blaze
Of God’s eternal day.”

This is why the day comes in, to show God’s glory in dispelling the world’s darkness and bringing all souls into his “marvellous light.”

Professor Olmsted of Yale College, in his

¹ *Acts xvii. 31.*

“Observations on Meteors,” says: “Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting meteors on the morning of November 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals of it covered by the pages of history.” To the eyes of some it seemed as though the heavens rained fire; and one beholder, speaking of the strange light, said: “I kept my eyes fixed on the morning star; I thought while that stood firm we were safe; but I feared every moment that would go, and all would go with it.” But the morning star kept its place, and the star-shower at length passed away. So in the midst of the fluctuations of the world, through all its strange scenes and startling experiences, we may regard the stability for which Christ stands now and evermore. We mourn the frailty, we are sick of the depravity of men. We are reminded, in view of these human shortcomings and failings, of the admonition of Israel’s prophet: “Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?” Men who have seemed like fixed luminaries in church and state, who have been regarded in society as models of rectitude, have failed their fellow-men

and proved themselves unfit to be trusted. To many who see these moral aberrations, who are wondering and amazed at the multitude of these "wandering stars," the question comes: "Whither shall we turn? Is there anything morally permanent?" The answer is, Yes! Let us keep our eyes fixed on "the bright and morning star." While that stands we are safe. Other stars may fall, but this one never! Blessed are all they who are assured of its stability.

Let us remember, moreover, that Christ is the needed spiritual light within. It is in no mere outward manifestation that this heavenly good can come. In one of the epistles of Peter, believers are exhorted to give heed to the study of God's Word "until the day-star arise in their hearts;"¹ that is, until they have experimental knowledge of this heavenly light—of the truth of Christ's religion, of their hope in him. This is "the witness within," of which the New Testament so emphatically speaks. It is the higher evidence than all others,—that of experience, Christ's work in our own souls, the revelation of his personal excellence to us; so that we come to regard him and his service above all other

¹ 2 Pet. i. 19.

good. God grant you, reader, this heavenly trust, this divine illumination of him who said, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

ENTERTAINING ANGELS.

With silence only as their benediction,
God's angels come.

WHITTIER.

THAT is a significant direction given by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews : "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers ; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."¹ The expression has evident allusion to the visitations received by Abraham and Lot, in the patriarchal ages, the accounts of which are interwoven with our earliest Scripture history ; accounts beautiful in their moral adaptations, as they are still to us fraught with the mysterious and sublime. The apostle would not have us to understand that such interviews and communings of the earthly with the celestial were confined to these first ages of human history. They awaited men when this Christian writer addressed them ; and he would have the blessing appreciated and improved : "Let brotherly love continue ;" "Bear ye one another's burdens ;" "Remember them

¹ Heb. xiii. 2.

that are in bonds as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body.”¹ Open your hearts to the instructions, wants, and manifestations of this wonderful nature you possess. Seek to know the significance of it. Study its unity ; learn its mutual dependencies ; feed and renew your love of it in the spirit of our new and highest Teacher sent from God. Such is the lesson taught.

If we want a heaven of angels, why may we not have one below ? I do not mean so perfect a heaven as that one where higher beings than men have inheritance and immortal life. I mean on earth, counting it as evil as it really is, with all its errors, wrongs, and abominations. If we only take the right view here, we shall understand what intercourse may await us, what righteous influences may go out from us to others, and be received by us from them in return. If the inner vision is right we shall not only kindly await, but plainly perceive the angels. It is because of man’s selfishness, and lack of confidence in his fellow-man, and neglect to cultivate his spiritual sympathies, that our good angels so rarely reveal themselves. The soul that goes out into the world wholly absorbed in self, seek-

¹ Heb. xiii. 1, 3 ; Gal. vi. 2.

ing only its own gratification, cannot see angels, save such as are spoken of in the parable as belonging to the company of the adversary. It is by kindly and blessed sympathy with human hearts and human natures that these holy revelations will be made to us.

We should, then, keep our hearts open to all the good we may receive in our intercourse and experience with those who mingle with us in the great journey of life. "I am nothing to the world, and the world is nothing to me," is a very poor thought, even for the lowliest of our race to cherish. Here on the right hand and left, before or behind us, may be those who wait to do us good, did we but know it, and who, in their nearness to us, should not be discouraged by our selfish demeanor from making manifest to us their good dispositions and intentions. Stranger faces may greet, but kindred hearts may speak to us; and "as face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man." Only let us greet and hear and receive kindly, and whether others lose or gain, some profit shall be ours. We may not always be listening to the communications of the good angels; but their messages will not injure us if the motives of our hearts are right. We may, on the other hand, be hearing instruc-

tive, substantial, saving truth, that had never thus been spoken to us before, from the very heart of infinite truth itself. We may, in many of these wayside interviews with our fellow-creatures,—in the little glimpses we get of their characters, in the little confidence they gain in ours, in some relation of their trials or anxieties or temptations or strifes or triumphs,—be laying up remembrances and forming associations that shall hereafter bear the fruit of richest wisdom and blessing. Something thus spoken, thus remembered, thus retained,—some good, right word, some safe suggestion or impression,—may be the very instrument of our instruction and safety and hope at some hour when it shall be more needed than we had ever dreamed it could be.

. Perhaps this idea of moral and sympathetic intercourse may be realized with no greater force anywhere in human life than in the domestic relations. It is here we come into most direct and unavoidable communication with those who shall prove to us the dispensers of blessings which can be derived from no other sources, and which, if blighted in their beginnings by our misconduct or indifference, will leave us in a poverty of spirit which no possessions or attractions of the world can supply. Look at the ministry of little

children. What parent has not known something of it? And more than blest are parents and homes where these visitants from the spirit-source are most truly welcomed and nurtured and sanctified by pure affections. "God sends them," says Mary Howitt, "to enlarge our hearts, to make us unselfish and full of kindly affections; to give our souls higher aims, and to call out all our faculties to extended enterprise and exertion; to bring round our fireside bright faces and happy smiles and loving, tender hearts. My soul blesses the Father every day that he has gladdened the earth with little children."

While there are so many whose hearts readily respond to this truthful language, we have to regret that there are also so many who fail to greet and entertain as they ought these messengers of heavenly wisdom and goodness. In how many homes are there no just conceptions of the unawakened powers for good within the little child. How often are these powers shamefully perverted, and these little ones of the Father offended in their whole nature and earthly life, by the errors and follies and sins of ignorant or selfish or worldly and falsely ambitious parents! How often, in sheerest ignorance or stupid indifference on the part of those who should be their

counsellors in noblest truth and holiest love, are they left to become ministers of sin and angels of death among their fellow-men !

A startling consideration, surely. Parent, what is the child God has given thee, as he comes, a stranger, into this strange world ? What shall he be if your devotedness and exertion can tell aright, as they will tell for good or for evil, upon his character and life ? You know not the powers here undeveloped which shall either be checked or called outward into action for the right or the wrong by you. Be careful, then, of your reception of this stranger. Be careful of the entertainment you give it, now that it is with you. Heaven says to you, as Pharaoh's daughter to the mother of Moses : "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Nursed, nurtured, it will be, by you or by the world ; and sure as the law of compensation stands, you and the world will receive the wages,—sorrow and shame, it may be, or glory and honor. Be careful, then, of the entertainment you provide for it. Let it be in the atmosphere of heavenly virtue. Let its daily and nightly ministries be truth and goodness ; let the right, God's right, be its guide and patron-saint everywhere ; and you may train

up an angel who shall one day give you such revelations of blessedness and peace as you now can perceive only in dim and distant imaginings. What a tribute to paternal faithfulness and love was that declaration of one who had seen much of the strife and vicissitude of earthly life: "I never knew a surer preventive in the way of wrong-doing than the remembrance of my mother's earliest religious exhortations to me. Many a time have I been saved from the commission of crime from the impressions thus given; and that I am now kept from ruin and permitted to preserve my integrity, I trace to the indelible effect of that simple prayer, made as my little hands were clasped at my mother's knee, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" It is thus that the early ministries of paternal affection send out into the world their messengers and agencies of light and salvation. Faithful, indeed, should these ministries be.

There is another thought now uppermost in mind, which, from its very sacredness, I hardly dare clothe in words; and yet I know that I shall be pardoned if I fail to express it as I might. There are dear ones among these visitants to our families and homes whose tarrying-time here is

brief indeed ; who only look in upon us from the great infinite with their innocent faces, giving us glimpses of their recognition in the midst of this great life-crowd in which we are all moving on, and then vanishing from our presence, as we say, forever. Ask many a bereaved and sorrowing heart if such have not been angels, and are not now angels, in their fondest memories ; and if the hope of meeting them again is not to be counted above all the dearest considerations earth can ever bring them ? There may be those now reading these lines whose beating hearts know full well what I mean, and who feel more on this sacred theme than my poor words can utter. What affections, hopes, sympathies, have these transient visitors awakened ! and who knows what increase of spiritual attraction these absent ones may gain in that mysterious being which is still theirs, though hidden from our outward vision, and what new greetings there may be in the world of immortal reunion ? With what significance has it been written, that “ they only can be said to possess a child forever who have lost one in infancy.”

Taking another view of our subject, let us understand that we may not unfrequently entertain angels in our right reception of the good

thoughts that visit us. We live by thought, if we live at all as our nature demands. If the inner guests be heavenly, so shall our life be heavenly ; if otherwise, then shall the life declare the truth. “The good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things ; the evil man, evil things.”¹ There can be no discipline without thought ; no great strength of moral character without discipline. Many are lost, not so much from lack of good thoughts as from lack of effort to keep them. The visitants are not entertained as they should be. They come and depart, and leave no blessing behind. Duty should not be thus tampered with. No sane man would permit himself to sleep amid robbers, with bags of gold in his hands. Yet how many, in their moral slumbering, suffer their most precious thoughts to be stolen away.

Good thoughts ! They are among the spiritual safeguards of our moral nature, as we strive here below with its infirmities. They caused the great Master of Christians to say to the tempter, “Get thee behind me, Satan, . . . man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”² They brought heaven to light in the mind of Stephen, as he

¹ Matt. xii. 35.

² Matt. iv. 4.

sank beneath the stones of his murderers. They enabled Luther to laugh at calamity, as he made his way onward in the strife of the Reformation. They have inspired the inebriate to shake off his chains, and stand erect in the freedom of a renewed and sober man. They have wrought righteousness in innumerable ways. It is said of Mr. Morse, our American projector of the telegraphic wires, that before entering upon this new and wonderful enterprise which has so distinguished him, he became so despondent as to resolve on taking his own life. He was delivered from death by some angel of a thought that came looking in through all the darkness of his soul, and made daylight there again. He resolved not to die, and so lived to make manifest his own worth to the world, as well as to declare to men the workings of one of the marvellous agencies of God. Many a one can testify that he has been saved from suffering and sin by some right thought that has made him strong and triumphant over evil. He has given entertainment to an angel of salvation.

Again: in our reception of those who seem to be most anxiously striving for the amelioration of mankind, we should ask ourselves whether we may not sometimes be giving entertainment to

some of earth's best angels. We have pretenders and laborers in human society, representing different ideas of progress, intellectual, social, religious, political. While we seek rightly to discriminate, we should be careful that we do not hastily condemn.

Some of the world's noblest benefactors have been scorned, insulted, and discarded by the world in their day. That world was not ready for them. Paul must be scourged, Galileo imprisoned, Luther summoned to Rome, Murray stoned. A greater than these, coming to his own, is rejected by them, and hurried away amid the clamors of the crowd who cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" They dared speak in the face of public opinion, and that sealed their doom. Now, some of the very descendants of these persecutors join in the praises of these leaders and benefactors of the past. Were the saints living now, the acclamations of honor would reach them; but the most we can do is to inscribe their names on high places, and speak their praises to the present and to coming generations. Foolish world, that such is its dulness of apprehension! It may be that some of the reformers of the present hour, now derided and scorned, will have an immortality on earth,

even, of which we do not now dream. While we would "prove all things" then, in the pretensions of reformers, let us be sure, if possible, to "hold fast that which is good."

We might speak of the angels rejected of society in its treatment of the guilty, but cannot, within the space intended for this chapter, do justice to the theme. We will only remark, that, did we know what moral capabilities were crushed and affections blighted, in consequence of the wrong treatment of criminals by society, we should see a most pointed application of that ancient Christian advice concerning the entertaining of angels who come to us with their pleading faces. This is advocating no morbid sympathy that would restrain the correction of the guilty, but rather a practical perception that would recognize their capacities for good. Let society understand their wants better ere it dooms them, as it often does by its short-sightedness, to perpetual sin and shame. Were the right receptive spirit ready in our hearts, many, who now bear with them the curse of the transgressor, might shine in virtue "as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever."

We need not, then, in our thoughts of angels, deem these heavenly visitants afar off. They

are nearer than we are often ready to believe. The same earth, the same heaven, the same laws of spiritual sympathy now in harmony, were in united operation when the world began. If there are angels above and beyond the earth, so there are angels upon it, many of them awaiting the word of the Father of all. They breathe his love ; they go on his errands of mercy ; they are ready to speak and to do in his holy name. Does not the soul of the reader bear witness to that sweet outflowing of the poet's song,—

“I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow, —
 Their was the soft tone and the soundless tread ;
Where smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
 They stood between the living and the dead.

“There have been angels in the gloomy prison,
 In crowded halls, by the lone widow's hearth ;
And where they passed the fallen have uprisen,
 The giddy paused, the mourner's hope had birth.”

Yes, this earth of ours is consecrated. The ground whereon we stand is holy. At noon-tide, in the watches of the night, or at morning's early dawn, these visitants are near us. Where their footsteps come we may enjoy celestial audience, and find in some of the most common places of our earthly journeying, what Jacob found on his way to Padan-aram, “the house of God, and the gate of heaven.”

WHAT IS DEATH TO US ?

What we need is to banish all haze from our conceptions of the reality of the future state, so that we can think of it heartily and talk about it to each other with clear eye and open brow, as we would talk of some great university or landscape of a foreign land.

REV. T. STARR KING.

THE religion of Jesus directs us to live each day in thoughtful reference to our departure from this earthly state. For among all the realities with which we have to deal, this is one of the most certain. Every hour, while we are at our toil or play of life, we see this surely verified. One after another, loved ones, friends, fellow-mortals, drop away from our earthly paths ; and the inquiry presses itself upon us : Who may next be called ? This word of departure may come to us. What if it shall ?

Since we cannot turn aside this event, how reasonable, as well as important, that we make ourselves acquainted with it ; that we live not as though this little earth-space in which we move, this little enumeration of moments which we call time, were all of the existence unto which

we are destined. Each day should awaken in us some thought on the meaning, as well as the certainty and nearness, of death; should send us to the great Source of life with prayer for his wisdom to enlighten us; should send us into ourselves, that in thoughtful meditation in the home of the heart, we may better comprehend the greatness of our means of spiritual enlargement, progress, and enjoyment; should send us to God's Word, that we may be instructed, edified, and strengthened in our anticipations of the Life Immortal.

It is in this heavenly revelation that we are instructed not to fear death as an enemy, but to regard it as a friend. It is an enemy to the apprehension of unbelief. But it is faith's friend. It should be studied truthfully, to be perceived and understood as one of the great instrumentalities of Divine Goodness in its dealings with man. So that whenever and however it come to us,—whether at midnight, or in morning or evening time, in solitude or with the crowd, amid the eager pursuits of temporal interests, or when resting awhile from them, in the room of sickness, where for long days or months or years we may have awaited it, or in awful suddenness, amid perils wholly unforeseen

and avoidable,— we may greet it with a welcome born of faith's triumph over all the fears of mere mortal dissolution ; may say to it : “ Thou art no stranger ; I have seen and known thee before. Thou hast been very near me in the past, hast taken many a loved one from my side, hast torn my heart with anguish, and left me to sorrow and mourning, but never to fear, or distrust of heaven. For I have known the nature of thy mission, thy goings forth from the great God of all. Thou art his messenger, as I am his child. Thou wilt do with me not as thou wilt, but according to the purpose of his wisdom and the riches of his grace. Where is thy sting ? It hath no power upon me ! ”

Such familiarity with death will keep us in remembrance of the interest we have in the life beyond it, an interest as truly ours as any we have in the things of the present world. Our departed loved ones, our companions, friends, the great multitudes of our race, are there. They are not cut off from us, nor we from them. They are near us as we walk these earthly ways with lightsome or with weary feet. Their God is ours. They live, as we live, under his guardianship. They remind us daily of our treasures in the heavens.

And so through every day's account of life we should seek to keep its present filled with good, should aim to keep its noblest ends in view, should be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long,"—in that fear long since defined as "the beginning of wisdom," which is wisdom's life and greatness and honor and power. In works of sternest duty, in trial and in joy, in deeds of love for men, in prayers of faith to God; in all the great and all the little things of this our mortal being, and in prospect of that higher state into which the wisdom and goodness of the Father calls us, we should be making the best and most of our pilgrimage. Short, indeed, is it; but yet how full of noble thoughts and truthful, hopeful words and faithful doings it may be! Such may it be to the writer and reader of these pages, so that at the close of its realities we may be able to say, as in the sweet words of a devout believer in man's immortality: —

"Life ! we have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather ;
'T is hard to part when friends are dear, —
Perhaps 't will cause a sigh, a tear.
Then steal away, give little warning ;
Choose thine own time ;
Say not, Good-night ! but in some higher clime
Bid me Good-morning !"

PRESENT SALVATION.

Hold there ! where runnest thou ?
Know heaven is in thee ;
Seek'st thou for God elsewhere,
His face thou 'lt never see.

ANGELUS SILESIUS, 1620.

“ **T**HIS is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”¹ He came where sinners were, to turn them away from their iniquities, to place them here and now in the way of salvation. The direction of his truth to us all continually is, “ Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.”²

Human effort is one of the agencies in effecting this salvation. But doubters have little faith in it. Amidst all the strivings for good among our fellow-men, how often do we meet the eye of disapprobation, and hear the word of discouragement and despair : “ A wicked world still ; none the better, on the whole, for all the reforms of which you boast. Human nature will be itself,

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

² 2 Cor. vi. 2.

notwithstanding all efforts for its moral improvement. The evil will overbalance the good. It always was so ; it will ever be so with mankind!" Such is the declaration too often greeting us when we talk of the moral progress of humanity. But it is ungenerous, unjust, pernicious. It is this very language and spirit which tends as much as anything else to keep the world just where it is. Let the word be continually going forth to men that they can do nothing for themselves,— make no advancement, no new acquisition, realize no great reformation, no newness of life, or spiritual effectiveness,— and what is the consequence ? You paralyze their best efforts for self-elevation ; you serve to render them, what they believe themselves to be, feeble, helpless, given over to the influences of the Adversary, rather than able to rise and prove themselves the sons of God ! Convince men that they are totally depraved, and what of noble and godlike moral exertion can you expect of them ? Spread abroad everywhere among them this despicable conviction, that there must needs always be so much wickedness in the world,— and, when you have given out this word, if you *speak* of reform, *do nothing* to bid it God-speed, but rather sneer at it quietly, and let the indifferent feel that this

is your influence in behalf of human reformation and progress,— and what is the result? Let one do this, and what is effected? Let twenty, a hundred, a thousand, take this course, and what follows? What but the very evil so readily and generally predicted? The very prediction has served to keep the evil in being. Though it be in itself a base libel on our nature, the constant repetition of the libel has made it truth! But take the opposite view. Instead of listening to this word of repining, discouragement, and despair, let every one who would prove himself a lover of righteousness put his heart and hands into the work of promoting it. Let him labor with his erring fellow-men with a true, earnest, and trusting soul. If strong himself, let him endeavor to bear the infirmities of the weak; if he have greater light than others, let him shed a portion of it on them; if higher advantages, let him minister to their elevation. Only let him work in faith, saying, and feeling the truth of the conviction as he speaks: "Now is the time, and this is my opportunity. This labor must not, shall not, be deferred. To wait is to give confidence to the Adversary. To say that he must always find as much employment as now, is to give him good cheer in his work of death. It

shall not be thus. Men need not be always slaves. They have a right to assert their moral freedom, and they have the means to secure it." Look at all our acknowledged reforms. It is thus they have moved on. So has the drunkard been made free from his chains of inebriation and death. The labor of faith and love rescued him. A clearer and more convincing demonstration of this was never given than in the Washingtonian reform. So shook and tottered and fell, at last, that stronghold of Slavery, in which more than half our nation once seemed so securely entrenched. No evil in the land seemed more gigantic and forbidding. Earnest, truthful, faithful words—from hearts and consciences that were thoroughly alive and sensitive to the magnitude of the evil—were first spoken, then repeated and multiplied, until the crisis came; and the evil was placed where it will never thus show itself again, while the education and progress of humanity are a part of human life and history. So have other reforms, in humbler ways, been worked out through this faithful effort of brave and loving souls. If we would have the world better, we may. But we must not rest too easily in the philosophy of waiting. Our work must be prompted by the conviction that a present

salvation is our own pre-eminent need, and that of our race.

“Thy kingdom come!” This is the true prayer of the Christian: “Come to me, come to all men here below. Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.” This is the kingdom of our Lord, this his coming for which we should pray,—his coming “with power and great glory,” to vindicate the Father’s name and bless his children with that knowledge of his grace which is life eternal,—his coming to overturn the old and the false, and bring in the new and the true. Thus did the Revelator on Patmos see spiritually this coming of the true Christ. He sang of “the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven,” and of the voice he heard saying, “The tabernacle of God is with men; and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them and be their God.” And he concludes the grand chant with the emphatic words: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”¹

How much of this very heaven are we desirous of having come to us and to our fellow-men?

¹ Rev. xxi. 4.

And how earnestly and constantly are we striving for this good, as though we believed it something more than a pleasing vision to dwell upon,— the dream of a joy to be realized somewhere in the dim distance, without the joint agency of man in this needed work of spiritual redemption ? How comprehensive, in view of this subject, are the words of Coleridge,—

“ Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,—
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift withdrawn as soon as given ;
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact.”

THE SECRET AND SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

LUKE, vi. 12.

WE read this of Jesus during his earthly life and work with man. Most of his work, as the world knew of it, was done openly in the sight of men. He mingled with the multitude, conversed, advised, taught, and sympathized with them. He "went about doing good."

This power which shone forth in his works had its origin, its supply. Jesus did not come in his own unaided strength. He was not the source of this strength. No language can be more explicit on this point than his own : "I can of mine own self do nothing ;" "I speak that which I have seen of my Father ;" "My Father is greater than I ;" "All power is given unto me of my Father." This power, which made him so great and so glorious, was a derived, a delegated power. Thus the works he wrought were the works of God ; thus was he in the Father, the

Father in him. He lived in constant connection with the Infinite Source of all life.

In this statement of the evangelist we have quoted, we find verified what Jesus stated in reference to his dependence upon the Father. To renew his strength for the work assigned him, he had recourse to communion with the Divine Source, to meditation and prayer. Hence, when the cares, anxieties, and toilings of the day were done, after he had been expending his heavenly power,—giving himself to the wants and calls of a needy humanity,—he withdraws from the multitude, and goes away to that Father on whose gracious bosom he would recline, and whose new supplies of grace he would seek for the life of self-sacrifice which was still before him.

He is our exemplar ; and if in any duty and work of life he teaches us clearly, it is in this instance, respecting our dependence upon that Source whence his life-supplies were derived, the necessity on our part of constant prayerfulness, meditation, and communion with heaven, that our inward strength may be sure, and our work for God and humanity effective and unfailing.

There is just as much Christian life and power

in the churches and in the world as there are hearts in subjection to Christ's rule, and in communion with that Holy Spirit from which he drew his supplies, and no more, that may really be relied upon and counted as the pure gold of the kingdom. You may have any amount of outward manifestation, of the "lo here!" or "lo there!"—costly churches, fashionable congregations, scholarly ministers, popular educational institutions, charitable activities not a few. But something more you must have to make any church or sect a divine, increasing, and regenerative power in this erring and sin-stricken and spiritually famishing world. Signs may deceive, and this may be but a show of the life that the churches and the world are most needing. The true life, the saving, exalting, redeeming, and glorifying power, is really in the pure, loving, consecrated, Christlike hearts which that church or sect may hold! Without this knowledge, tongues, gifts, however rare or abounding, may be a show without substance, the body without the soul.

Godliness is the divine supply of all souls. It is the force of all forces in the work of spiritual regeneration and redemption. It is because we believe in its infinite fulness and

efficacy that we have hope and faith in the reconciliation of all souls to God. Jesus would have fainted but for this conviction, this joy that was set before him,—the highest joy of his spirit, the completion of the work given him of the Father to do. The apostles would have given up their work in despondency, but for this ever present inspiration—the fulness of God's love adequate to all spiritual wants. They were “persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, could separate them from the love of God, which was in Christ Jesus the Lord.”

Let us note a few instances wherein this divine supply is needed in the individual soul.

1. In Temptation. All of us are subjects of temptation. Christ was assailed by it. That which saved him from its influences, will save us also. He could not have stood against it but for that divine force which was in him, and which he kept supplied through communion with his Father and our Father, his God and our God. That led him to say at once and persistently to the Adversary, “Get thee behind me, for thou art an offence unto me.” It is

morally certain that we shall be tempted ; but in this there is no sin. The sin is in the yielding. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.” If we cut ourselves away from Christ, if we have in the time of temptation no heavenly principle, as he had, to fall back upon, then are we in moral peril, and may be weak and overcome when we deem ourselves strongest. But if we can go confidently, in the quiet and earnestness of the soul, to the Father, and pray to him and consult anew his directions and lay hold upon his hand, then may we realize the full meaning of that utterance of the Psalmist, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.”¹ It is then and thus that the trusting soul may find the secret of the Lord, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. How grandly expressive of this power are the words of one of Newton’s Olney hymns,—

“Oh, I have seen the day,
When, with a single word,
God helping me to say,
‘My trust is in the Lord,’
My soul has faced a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose !”

¹ Prov. xviii. 10.

2. In our dealings with the world we need this inward seeking for the heavenly supply. That we may fulfil the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," an inward supply, adequate to the doing of this duty, is requisite. For this we must go to the Father. The apostolic word is, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." But neither the apostle's word alone, nor our assent to it, will insure this love of man to man. This love of God must be the deep and constantly fed conviction of his soul. It was thus with Jesus. The great love ever overflowing from him had its constant supply from the beneficent Father of all.

Loving our fellow-men as he loved them, we shall seek in all our intercourse to deal justly, mercifully, righteously, rendering to all their dues, in that charity which "suffereth long and is kind, secketh not her own, bareth, hopeth, endureth all things, and that never faileth." All this must come through self-seeking, self-discipline, application to the divine source, reliance upon the wisdom from above, "which is pure, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

He who would deal justly in all his business

transactions with his fellow-men from day to day, needs to keep true and constant and faithful in his business first with God, needs to seek the counsel and aid of the Father in secret, that he may walk openly with his fellow-men "in all godliness and honesty."

3. In the afflictive allotments of life we need this inner aid, this divine supply coming through prayer and trust and communion with the Father. In seasons of affliction the sympathy of earthly friends is of unspeakable value to us. Their words and offices of love cheer and bless us. But how often do these prove ineffectual to meet our wants, earnestly and constantly as they may seek and minister to us. There is "a deeper depth" of the soul than that which they can reach, hidden from all human access, where only grace can come of the Infinite fulness and love! And for this want the Giver of all good has provided. The sorrow that would go apart to weep and meditate may find in him that strength which will enable it in faith to say, "not my will, but thine be done," — enable it also to realize in its high communing and its heavenly confidence, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable

fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”¹

Let us understand, then, that in order to fulfil the great objects of our life as Jesus has given us the example, we need the same divine resources that supplied him. We need them now, and we never needed them more than now. The excitement of the world is everywhere about us; its outward distractions are forcing themselves upon us through every day and almost every hour of our life. Fast thinking, fast living and doing, seem to be the order of the day. Our own land is pervaded with an intense restlessness and activity, which would seem to be anything but favorable to habits of quiet thought, calm meditation, or devout repose. Many seem to think that they are not living at all, if it be not at the swiftest rates of speed and in the midst of new excitements.

But if we will rightly understand the needs of our spiritual nature, and in what our truest life consists, we shall see that this perpetual roar and agitation is anything but favorable to the supply of them. Neither our physical nor mental powers can endure this constant strain. If even stone and iron will disintegrate under constant

¹ Heb. xii. 11.

jarring, so will the soul lose its spiritual compactness and strength by these unceasing outward infractions upon it.

What, then, is its security? Nothing short of that which Jesus found, as he left the multitude and went apart to seek quiet and renew his inward strength through meditation and prayer. Even so must we do, and do it conscientiously, resolutely, habitually. Just as we go to our meals, to our daily work or nightly rest, so should we go to the closet or mountain apart,—anywhere that we may have seclusion, quiet, peace from the world's noise and confusion, anywhere that we may find time for a little free breathing, bracing prayer, and heavenly meditation.

At the time of this writing there runs by my dwelling-place the grand and beautiful Merrimac, whose waters move the vast machinery of our city and of the other cities and towns through which it passes. I hear its murmurs night and day, as it ripples in its summer slowness through its rocky channel, or sweeps down in its spring fulness, bearing the freshets of the north to the wide and receptive ocean. Its steady and resistless force is the reality which oftenest holds me. And whence this ever moving, ever onward, ever

working power? Ah! you must look for it, not here where our eyes are daily and nightly gazing upon it, and our ears are greeted with the ceaseless hymn of its good cheer and adoration. To find the sources of all this power, you must go far back among the mountains of the Granite State, far up toward their summits, and find the living springs quietly at work in their hiding-places, and constantly feeding the little streams that run down the hill-slopes and along the shaded valleys, till they form this swelling flood of living waters as it rolls on and on to the sea.

So if you would have this Christian life, in the individual or in the churches, a vital, working, constantly effective and unfailing force, it must have its supplies far back in the summits of faith and communion with God,—in secret prayer and heavenly trust, in holy contemplation, in Christian resolution and consecration. Of this comes fulness and life, unfailing strength and prevailing power.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We may or may not pronounce the ancient phrases, but we need no longer hesitate to say, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;" meaning, a personal heart and will at the centre, a sonship that stands for humanity, a spiritual energy that is the life of men, and through which they come into freedom and righteousness.

MUNGER : *Freedom of Faith*, p. 60.

VERILY, this all Christians ought to understand. Nothing is plainer in the New Testament teachings than the assurance given us of the work of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts and affections of men, directing them into the truth, and into the life which the truth inspires. Holy men wrote under its influence, Christ possessed it without measure, the first apostles were endowed with its power; it is promised to all souls seeking and accepting the heavenly direction of the great Teacher sent of God to man. The theological mistiness hindering the right comprehension of this influence cleared away, we understand this promise of our gracious Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, to be as reasonable and just as any other which he may, in his loving kindness, make to his

children. The blindness in reference to this blessing ought to be removed, especially among those who have been blest in any good degree with the light of the Christian revelation. It is a shame to the Christian Church that there should be so many in it, or who are looking to it for instruction, adrift on this subject, and in the condition of certain Christian professors of old, who, on being asked by the apostle, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" replied, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit."¹

This heavenly influence is to be regarded as an emanation from God our Father, the power of divine goodness,² just as light and heat are emanations from the sun. This allusion is made as the simplest illustration of the subject. Philosophers have not yet exactly concluded what light is, or how it operates, but all of us know something of its effects upon vegetation; that the bloom of summer and the fruitage of autumn come of it,—effects which could not be realized in the absence of it. The human heart may possess all the elements of religious life, and

¹ Acts xxix. 2.

² This is one of the definitions of the Holy Spirit given by Dr. Jonathan Edwards.

God's spirit may be near it, resting upon it, even, with the refreshing power in it; yet if this heart be not open to its influences, and in readiness to receive them, there will be barrenness and unfruitfulness there. It is to the receptive, to those in readiness and in waiting, to the earnestly seeking, that the Spirit comes. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."¹ If earthly parents are in readiness to bestow favors upon their children, "how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."² Near to our souls, a positive, accessible good, is the spirit of God. Such are the authoritative instructions of Christian truth respecting it.

This, dear reader, is for your instruction and mine. How far have we realized the pre-eminent blessing of which I am speaking? If we do not possess it, then why not? If because we have been too regardless of the meaning of the Holy Spirit, and its actual work with man; or have regarded it as pertaining chiefly to Christians of other days, now gone; or have been so much absorbed in other questions of theology as to overlook this, one of the most significant of all,—

¹ Matt. vii. 7.

² Luke xi. 13.

whatever the cause may be, in the name of our great and glorious Gospel, let us see that this deficiency is no longer applicable to us. With our pre-eminent Christian faith, let us seek with all our powers the influence and life of the Holy Spirit, not only for our own highest personal blessing, but that this faith may stand and operate and reign and be glorified, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of the living God! Let no souls, no sects, no churches, know more of the Holy Spirit than ours.

“ Come, purifying Spirit, come,
And make our hearts thy constant home ! ”

ABHORRENCE OF EVIL, ADHERENCE TO GOOD.

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

APOSTLE PAUL. — *Rom. xii. 9.*

ABHORRENCE of evil surely implies something stronger than a silent objection to its being and doing, something more demonstrative than a tame repugnance to its manifestations. It means dislike, displeasure, *hatred* — in the sense in which this term is to be understood as applying to God in expressing his opposition to wrong and sin. This is a part of the creature's imitation of him, a part of the godlikeness which the creature is to seek. If God loves and favors sin, then may his children do so. If he is opposed to it, sets his face against it, warns his children to flee or forsake it, there is but one conclusion as to the light in which his children are to regard it. Our New England Puritan forefathers had a very expressive name for some of their children, *Hate-Evil*. The name signified the hope of the parent respecting the child.

The evil which we are to abhor is everything opposed to the moral and spiritual well-being of man. The embodiment of this evil in a personal being has never, as we understand it, made the strife against evil any more effective with mankind. These old ideas of the Devil, as a special personal tempter of every man, are getting outgrown in the churches ; but the fact of evil, of wrong, of sin, is not, cannot be, outgrown. That is an ever present, ever suggestive, ever aggravating reality. The contact is inevitable. One or the other must yield, the tempter or the tempted ; which, it is for our highest interest to answer in “the good fight” which by divine grace we may be able to maintain. To get a personal Devil out of the way, is not to get rid of that which he is understood to personify. Evil still lives, and the call upon us is to resist and overcome it.

We lately met with this poetic querying as to the wisdom of giving up the idea of a personal Devil, according to the teaching of the old theology. The writer seems wittily in earnest :—

“ Men don’t believe in a Devil now, as their fathers used to do ;
They ‘ve forced the door of this broadest creed to let His Maj-
esty through ;
There is n’t a print of his cloven foot, or a fiery dart from his
bow,
To be found in earth or air to-day, for the world has voted so.

“ But who is it mixing the fatal draught that palsies heart and
brain,
And loads the bier of each passing year with ten hundred
thousand slain ?
Who blights the bloom of the land to-day with the fiery breath
of Hell,
If the Devil is n’t, and never was ? Will somebody rise and
tell ?

“ Who dogs the step of the toiling saint, and digs the pit for
his feet ?
Who sows the tares in the field of time wherever God sows
his wheat ?
The Devil is voted not to be, and of course the thing is true ;
But who is doing the kind of work the Devil alone should do ?

“ Will somebody step to the front forthwith, and make his bow,
and show
How the frauds and crimes of a single day spring up ? We
want to know.
The Devil was fairly voted out, and of course, the Devil’s
gone ;
But simple people would like to know who carries his
business on ? ”

This question involves no puzzle. The real tempter to evil is clearly set forth in the Scriptures : “ Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”¹ It is a battle with our own evil habits and inclinations, into which we are called,—with that “ subjection

¹ James i, 14.

to vanity" in which human nature was created. This is Devil enough, personal, as men are personal, and to be fought and vanquished, as men would be personally and spiritually safe and free. There is no voting this Satan away ; he must be *driven* away and destroyed by truth and righteousness ; and as these prevail in human souls, he will be.

It is of great consequence what attitude we assume towards wrong,—great consequence to ourselves and to others, as respects the influence which we exert. But few men regard an evil deed with complacency ; but few, again, if not moved by self-interest, regard an evil deed with downright abhorrence. Indifference is the attitude which men too often assume. But this is one of the most afflictive of mistakes. It is the occasion of no small share of the actual evil-doing there is, even in what is called our most advanced society. It is a disposition to be quiet and let evil alone, because of its prevalence, its popularity. What would Christianity have done at the start, what would all its subsequent efforts have effected, if this fear or indifference had governed its advocates ? It would have been weaker than a shield of gauze against the sword-strokes of the Adversary. But it did not come into the

world thus to compromise or to tamper with evil, but to abhor and assail it.

Many of the evils of human society are kept in countenance because they are not abhorred as they should be. Allowance in them, repetition of them, cause apathy in reference to their depredations. The old words of Pope are verified : —

•

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

It is thus that evil riots in secret and stalks abroad at noonday, that the social evil defiles human society, that fraud finds apologists and holds up its head in what are deemed respectable places, that the fires of intemperance are burning all around us, and social, moral and political corruption are eating away at the substance of our national being and prosperity. If those who know the right, and profess adherence to it, would more resolutely and habitually put themselves in positive opposition to these wrongs, we should have diminution of them which we cannot now readily compute.

Years ago there was a great prize-fight be-

tween two representatives of nations, England and America. They had met to bruise and batter each other according to the most approved pugilistic methods. Great enthusiasm, pervading high and low places, was awakened by the event. It found expression in parlor and bar-room alike. The *Times* newspaper of London improved the occasion to draw the notable conclusion, that only nations possessing remarkable qualities could produce two such champions of manly strength and endurance ! Nor was the interest confined to sporting-circles. Men and women, old and young, were alike subjects of the interest. "It still seems incredible," says a writer in reference to that event, "but I well remember hearing Christian young ladies of the highest social position and pretensions, discuss with animation, and without a blush, the disgusting details of the fight. They read, they listened, they asked questions, and they replied, until indifference succeeded to aversion, and then until enthusiasm conquered indifference. Indifference, instinctive aversion even, was not enough to secure their safety. They needed with set purpose to abhor. Deliberate hatred was their panoply." This villainous evil is now staring us in the face, in the fact that such prominent notice

is given, in some of our city dailies, of the pugilistic encounters and victorious fighters of the present time. "The offence is rank."

The same is true of other evils which abound in society. Vice and wrong often seen, constantly repeated, fresh records coming daily before us in the newspapers, talked of in the streets, in the workshop, and drawing-room,—it becomes contagion, and its work is debasing and corrupting. Indifference to it is sin. Abhorrence manifested is the duty of all who would be true to the highest interests of humanity to the demands of Christian truth and righteousness. Righteous public sentiment is made up of the righteous sentiments and convictions of individuals. We each have a contribution of this force to make, if we would have a righteous public sentiment prevail.

Evil only asks to be let alone. It can carry on its work most effectually without spectators to criticise it. Rogues do not like a vigilant police-force; and there are those who dislike Christian teachers and reformers if they are persistent against special and prevailing sins, and do not preach a gospel so general and so liberal, that they who most need its searching reproofs are most pleased with its soothing and soporific

platitudes. Against all this, the testimony of the Christian Gospel is as clear as Divine truth can make it.

While we are justified in thus urging the plea of the apostle, we are all the time to understand that this abhorrence or hatred of evil does not extend to those who commit it. Love is for them,—compassion, pity,—as well as justice, punishment, retribution. Christ loved the sinner, while he had no love for the sin. That was his abhorrence, constantly. He was ever pitiful towards the transgressor; but he had only detestation for the transgression. He came not to hate, not to condemn the sinner hopelessly, but to save,—to release him from his bonds, to give him pardon, newness of life in truthfulness, obedience and love. All the abhorrence of evil we are ever called upon to exercise is perfectly compatible with the spirit of Christ, who came to confront the wrong, to vindicate the right, and to make man a partaker of the Divine holiness.

The other clause of the apostle's injunction deserves attention; "Cleave to that which is good." This signifies not a mere acknowledgment of the claims of heavenly righteousness upon us, but closest adherence to truth and to duty. It is an alliance with goodness which

makes it a part of ourselves, our daily being and strength.

Goodness, as Christian truth reveals it, is the natural element of the soul. The old doctrine, that man is totally opposed in heart to truth and right, is one of the opinions of the past which the churches are dropping from their creeds. Man is capable of receiving the seed of divine truth into the soil of his heart so that it may germinate there, or he is not. If he is not, then all the appeals which come to him in the Gospel are meaningless ; if he is, then obedience is his true life. His new birth of the divine spirit is essential to this life. He must feed upon that which his spiritual nature craves, and without which it cannot have true development and power. Most men, even the lowest, have an innate reverence for goodness. It appeals to their consciences ; it awakens what there is in their own nature that can be satisfied only with goodness. It was this susceptibility which Jesus saw in man, and which drew him in sympathy to the erring and sinful. He knew that his appeals could reach them, and draw forth responses from their hearts. He knew that all souls would at last hear his voice and come to him as their Deliverer and Life ; because they

could not rest out of him, could not find their spiritual nature satisfied, save with the blessing which he alone by Divine grace could impart. It is this appreciation of goodness in man upon which God's spirit operates, with which it bears witness of the true Fatherhood and Sonship. The evil in man is not converted into goodness, but is cast out, that the good in him may be quickened, developed, made to grow and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

Each to its element, each to its end, this is a law of nature. It is a spiritual law, involving man's destiny. Whatever may have befallen him since his creation, whatever explanations theologians may put upon what is called his degeneracy, or fall, one thing is sure,—he is still an object of paternal interest on the part of his Creator, and can find truest action and enjoyment of his highest powers only in him. This appeal of the apostle, therefore, is in perfect accordance with our spiritual nature and needs.

Again: goodness, by which we understand Christian obedience and life, is its own reward. A patient, cured by the kind and skilful attentions of a physician, would not think of demanding payment of his helper for the work he had

wrought upon him. The obligation would be the other way. So are we to regard our obligations to the Great Physician of our souls, sent with divine supplies from the Father of all to his children. With what inconsiderateness, not to say foolishness, do some ask : “ If all souls are to be blest, finally, with the heavenly life, what is the intent of preaching the Gospel here and now, or of any special exertion for a holy life ? ” What a narrow conception of goodness and of the object of holy living does such a statement evince ; and how is it utterly lost in that blaze of light streaming from the apostolic testimony : “ For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.”¹ Service on principle,—this is requirement of him who is “ Lord of all ; ” and this is one of the great lessons yet to be learned more thoroughly than ever in all the churches in Christendom.

Too many professed believers in “ the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men,” fail to be moved and inspired by this highest of all considerations. They have in theory the true

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

exposition of the Christian service and life. The world needs to see how faithfully they can reduce it to practice. For deeply as we condemn this foolish saying just noted,—“If all souls are to be saved at last, of what consequence is a righteous life in the present?”—there may be those who, by their very example of indifference to the spiritual demands of our pre-eminent faith, are provoking this very question from ignorant and prejudiced opposers of it. Let us be wiser.

Adherence to goodness is so much contributed to the great work of human progress. It is right that God should reign in all souls. From everlasting to everlasting his delight is in the diffusion of good, the utmost diffusion of it, in his own time and way. The powers that are hateful to him should be hateful to us. In the pertinent words of Robertson : “I will tell you what to hate. Hate hypocrisy, hate cant, hate indolence, oppression, injustice, hate Pharisaism ; hate them as Christ hated them, with a deep, living, godlike hatred.” What to love, Christianity as pertinently directs us. Love God, first of all, the Fountain of goodness ; love man, His offspring and the object of his unchangeable affection ; love truth, duty, justice, mercy, holiness, as Christ loved them ; love goodness as the

prevailing and overcoming power by which evil shall be rooted out of the universe, and "God shall be all in all." Blessed are they who have a life-enlistment in this heavenly service, and who prove faithful therein.

THOUGHTS FOR PALM SUNDAY.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty !
In lowly pomp ride on to die !
O Christ ! thy triumphs now begin,
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

MILMAN.

THERE is a day in the Christian Church calendar called Palm Sunday, commemorative of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the account of which is given in Luke xix. 37-40 : " And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen ; saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

We do not, of course, interpret these words of Jesus literally. They signify that the response

to God's truth from man will somehow find utterance, and his name and honor be vindicated by his children. Human nature will manifest its admiration for the right when the time comes. Lofty genius, self-sacrificing philanthropy, distinguished heroism, awaken and call forth human praise. The claims and works of Jesus impel admiration and the highest expressions of thanksgiving and joy.

What are his claims ? Consider the truth with which he comes to man. Everywhere and always do we find in it supplies for our needy nature. Light is not more evidently adapted to the human eye than is the Gospel to the spiritual nature of man. When the Scotch Missionary to India read to the intelligent Hindu youth, for the first time, the precept of Jesus, "I say unto you, Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you," one of them could not refrain from giving utterances to his feelings : "Beautiful, indeed, how beautiful !" For days and weeks, he could not help repeating : "'Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you !' Excellent, indeed ! This must be the truth." It commended itself at once to his reason and affections.

Other religions of the earth may be outgrown, their moral codes searched out and exhausted,

but Christ's, never. There lives not a man too depraved to embrace it, or too pure and holy to need its inspiration and strength. For who is there to whom the apostolic precept, "Grow in grace," bears no meaning,—who, to whom the command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," does not present an incomparable sphere of duty, an infinitely exalted standard of moral attainment? Perfection is the only limit,—constant growth and improvement, the great law of the Christian life.

Our Heavenly Father's interest in his children, and the interest they are to have in one another, are revealed through Christ. No religion, as that of the Gospel, so closely, universally, everlastingly binds all souls in one interest, one sympathy, one life. It has always done most for the world, and gives largest hope for the race,—hope which no heathenism, paganism, philosophy, Judaism even, could ever impart. We are told that at a meeting of the Radical Club in Boston, where the comparative merits of Brahmanism and Christianity had been discussed, Mr. Wendell Phillips very pointedly said to the company assembled: "Gentlemen, the reply to all your arguments about Brahmanism is in one word, *India*.

The argument and defence, unanswerable and impregnable in behalf of Christianity, is also in one word, *Christendom*." The world can read the influence of Brahmanism in that "tomb of nations," India ; it can see the beginnings of the power of Christianity in the leading civilized nations of the earth, where, even now, the people are learning and practising but the rudiments of this all-comprehending religion.

Christianity will do the best and not the worst with our nature, through all its perils, adversities, failures, calamities, conflicts, and defeats. Evil is transient, good the prevailing power. As this whole humanity has borne the image of the earthly so shall it bear the image of the heavenly. There are germs and capabilities of this heavenliness in man. Hence there need be no despondency in view of the call made upon him by the Gospel to repentance, rectitude, righteousness, holiness of life. To preach this Gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,—this was and is the joy of Christ's mission. So came he eighteen centuries ago ; so comes he to us at the present hour.

We do not hesitate to condemn these Pharisees who would have Jesus suppress the acclamations

of the multitude. Yet they were no more unreasonable than many who would suppress his praises by neglect of the truth which he came to dispense, or stand in opposition to its holy demands. The world is full of this opposition in its various forms,—in open, flagrant, far-abounding iniquity, bigoted unbelief, wilful or unblamable ignorance, the moral insanity that makes a mock of sin, the delusion which seeks, in mere temporal gratifications and follies, to satisfy the longings of the human soul. All these would not only suppress Christ's praises, but his truth and power among men. Individuals or institutions, not in moral correspondence with this heavenly revelation and intention, would not have Christ to reign over them. Philosophies or theologies adverse to his spirit of expansive and exhaustless benevolence are to be ranked in this opposition. It is the work of Christianity to appeal to them in its own spirit, and to do its holy will with them ; in its own spirit, I say, as this must sooner or later be the power that shall reach and transform them.

To oppose a religion like this is like spurning from our own door a dear friend who comes to give us strength in our weakness, light in our darkness, plenty in our poverty, comfort and joy

in our affliction. It is the great strife against ourselves that makes us, in this respect, such inconsistent sinners in the sight of our heavenly Father.

Acceptance of Christian truth, and loyalty to it, is therefore the greatest and most important lesson of our subject. When God, the Father speaks, it is for the interest of his children to hear. He speaks to us in the truth of Christ: “This is my beloved Son; hear ye him!” It has been his call to man ever since this Meditator of the New Covenant had his ministry here. It is his call now. Christianity is not only to be inwardly accepted in its statements of truth, but honestly and cheerfully avowed. The good it involves demands this. It is worth receiving and enjoying; it is worth avowing, standing by, defending, and honoring. Hence Christian profession is everywhere enjoined in the New Testament. “Let us hold fast,” not only the principles, but “the profession of our faith”—its profession as a religion, a vital spiritual force which we seek for the life and healthfulness of our own souls, and which we believe in as a regenerative power needed in all souls.

Next to a Christian profession comes Christian activity. Religious apathy is everywhere con-

demned in the Scriptures. Our hands were not more evidently given us to work with, nor our eyes to see with, than our spiritual faculties to be actively and profitably used. Wakeful, fervent, vigorous spiritual life has accomplished whatever of the great and good and effective we now witness in the kingdom of the Redeemer. It was this which kept alive Christianity in the earlier periods of its history, and bore it on through the darkness and change of a thousand years, till its strong witness-voices awoke the world anew at the dawn of the Reformation. This has since led the way in successive reformations,—has given to not a few of our Christian sects their most effectual power, and made them the real contributors, that they have been, to the actual enlargement, growth, vitality, and strength of the whole Christian Church. It is this which now gives power to many a movement in Christendom, and tends to make the religion of Jesus a light and glory in the midst of the moral darkness and shame of our world. And it is this which must sustain us, as we seek to enlighten this world with “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”

The activity of the Church is one of the conditions on which it is to live. We may accept

this condition ourselves, as a leading force in connection with others in it. The armor that we bear signifies that we are to do a pioneer work, that we are to be foremost in hope and faith and love, and all their legitimate endeavors and accomplishments. Our helmet, Salvation, may mean more than this very word means on other helmets in the ranks of the redeeming army. Yet for all this, many of us may be no better soldiers than others of these very hosts can present,—some of us, perhaps, not so good. If we love our own church-cause with an unfaltering love (which is the true loyalty), if we hold dear the great principles which our church-edifices stand for, and which our own ministry signifies, then are we to carry on the work which our faith announces, and that we, if we are speaking the truth to the world, have enlisted to perform.

Christian loyalty! let us heed well this claim of our holy faith upon us. We need not be less loyal in our good works with others, because we are first loyal to our own church and communion. “Do good unto all men; especially to those [or with those] who are of the household of faith.” This is the right direction. Faithful at home, faithful elsewhere; faithless, unreliable, there,—the same in other places and connections.

In the light of this lesson let us consider —

1. The inevitable vindication of the truth and the right, under the providence of God. Oppositions, these will be sure to awaken, while they encounter human ignorance and folly. Improvements and reforms work slowly. Galileo is persecuted and his testimony silenced, because science has just convinced him that the earth moves. Harvey, for the discovery of the circulation of the blood, is bitterly denounced by the physicians and other scientists of his day. Fulton is ridiculed as his first steamer moves slowly up the Hudson; and Morse, whose genius has aided more than that of any one of our race in opening and speeding the facilities for communication of the earth's nations and peoples, was called to encounter a world of doubt and coldness and discouragement in the outset of his afterwards illustrious career. All these, and others we might name, are benefactors now. The world henceforth will give them honor and renown. Every reformer will have his up-hill strivings, his hand-to-hand encounters with error and wrong,—denunciations, persecutions, sufferings, and it may be, death. But the day of triumph comes, and the unpopular cause then awakens the acclamations of the multitude of mankind.

2. The duty of fidelity to our highest convictions of what is right. Too many fail, and make *nothings* of themselves, when they ought to be forcible *somethings* just here. They allow prejudice and party to govern and direct them, instead of a good conscience. They utterly forget that one soul siding with God is in the majority against all parties, all multitudes, all numbers, in the universe opposed to them. Better say *yes*, alone, for the truth, than with the masses for a lie! For the truth will live and the lie perish ; and withholding our influence for the right will not defraud it of its just dues, in the long run. We are to be ready to follow the truth, and our convictions of conscience in the light of it, fearlessly ; remembering that, notwithstanding our denial of it, it is destined at last to prevail.

Man might at this moment cease every tribute of praise to the great Creator of all. Yet would this testimony to him be silent in the earth ? I tell you, Nay. The ocean would still chant adorations to him on her ever-sounding shores ; the flowers of the valley would look up to him in gladness and beauty ; the birds of the morning and evening would send forth their anthems in his vast temple, and earth reflect his beaming brightness back to heaven. God will have praise.

His truth in Jesus will. If it be not hailed and welcomed in one way, it will be in another. If the voices of this multitude in its favor are suppressed, another will yet come with its hosannas, or even the very stones will proclaim them. You cannot cheat the world out of God's reign in it. That "was, and is, and is to come." Better strive to do something towards preparing the way! The kingdom of which Christ was founder is all conquering. Humanity, as one, shall be drawn to him. "Worlds unborn shall sing his glory."

3. Our other thought is this,—our duty to follow the leadings of our holy faith, to see that no others are in advance of us. Let us not stifle our convictions, nor limit the means by which we can give expression to them. There is no safety but in duty. Christ will have the honor due to his mission and name. If our hearts and tongues do not give this honor, others will. That old word will have fulfilment: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." His judgment is set more and more by the increase of his truth and the love of his righteousness in human souls. The surest praise we can render him is not that given out in strong words

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and acclamations only, but in the living deeds of
a loving loyalty.

“For these do men and angels wait ;
. . . And these are sure,
As God and goodness shall endure,
As right, and truth, and God are great.”

DEVOTIONAL LIFE OF THE HOME.

Where'er the Lord shall build my house,
An altar to his name I 'll raise.

SCOTT.

THE family is the first human institution. It was so in the beginning, and, as we read the Divine method, will be so through all time. "God setteth the solitary in families," and from these centres intends that the earth shall be peopled and the influence of truth and righteousness be everywhere extended. The ancient promise to Abraham was, that in him "all the *families* of the earth should be blessed." This promise has distinctly in view the family relation. It is not merely the general, but the particular, the minute, the individual application of the promise, that immediately concerns us. What is this blessing in Christ,—how manifested, when effected? These are the practical considerations growing out of the promise itself. Do we give praise to God for this promise, so gracious, extensive, universal? Take it

home; let its life be in you, imparted to your family, go out from your family to others, become a part of the general religion. If the religion do not exist in the family, it will not in the neighborhood, in the state, in the world.

We all know something of the influences of home. Its memories, its impressions, its loves, go with us everywhere. No attractions that meet us far away, amid other homes or in other lands, can efface that indwelling respect and love for our early home. True to its sacred influences the pilgrim-heart responds,—

“Where'er I roam, whatever lands I see,
My heart, untravelled, still returns to thee.”

The home, then, as we understand it, should be the place of Christian Example, Devotion, and Instruction.

1. We put Example first, when speaking of paternal duty. Good precepts on the part of parents and guardians are not enough to insure a well-ordered and virtuous home. Even good words may be cheap in the family-circle, as elsewhere. What the parent *does* is always of more consequence to the child than what he *says*. The saying has chief power only or mainly as it accompanies the deed. If the

child is tempted to wrong, what an inducement to resist it is ever coming up before him in the light of a righteous paternal example. Was not that an utterance of wisdom on the part of the Psalmist: "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."¹ What we pray for or commend in the morning, we should live for during the day,—for consistency of character, righteous action, for fidelity to duty, for firmness, tenderness, self-control, justice, kindly affection. There is an eloquent persuasion in a Christian life, which no mere words can ever contain. Many a home, humble, though it might have been, has by this means sent out an influence into the world that has added to the world's virtue and strength. It is thus that the parent, though he may not be a ready and voluble pleader for the excellence of the Christian precepts, may have that daily practice in accordance with them which shall tell, if with noiseless yet with sure effect, upon the members of his household. "Whoso heareth these sayings of mine," said Jesus, "and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock."² This is the sure

¹ Ps. ci. 2.

² Matt. vii. 24.

and abiding foundation for all homes — the sayings of Jesus lived therein.

2. The Devotional spirit is essential to the true Christian character of the home. Religion asks expression in word and form on all proper occasions. It asks such in the home, and should have it there, in its time. There should be, it seems to us, if we read our religion aright, in every home a family altar — a daily acknowledgment, in some form, of our religious obligations to the Father of all. If children look for guidance and support to earthly parents, so should all look to the great Guardian of souls. Reading of the Scriptures and prayer and sacred song — a service, however brief and simple, in which the united expression of the family goes heavenward, the look upward, amid the rushing past of these earthly excitements and scenes — well befit the daily home-life. Our dependence on God, our daily temptations to sin, our daily causes for thanksgiving, our daily need of new mercies, all are so many reasons for this observance. They are so plain that the simplest may comprehend them.

The common objections to this observance are obvious. One is, that stated family devotional services often become monotonous, and beget

dislike rather than enjoyment and pleasure. This may be true in certain instances, but what shadow of an argument does it afford against that which should be a delight as well as duty? Devotion need never be monotonous nor unprofitable, and will not if the heart is in it. And it is our first duty to look to this. One of the very objects of daily devotion is, that our spiritual life may be renewed and abounding.

Want of ability is pleaded. Those who must plead, however, would not make this excuse if they could have no food until they had prayed for it. The will usually finds out the way. Words for prayer may come as readily as for complaint or rejoicing.

Want of capacity may be sometimes another word for want of inclination. It is not thus in the secular pursuits of life, that the want of ability holds men back. They create abilities, they make circumstances for themselves; and become, by perseverance, strong in that wherein, at the beginning, they were weak indeed. Besides, there are excellent forms of family prayer instituted for those who may need them, in the use of which many have found their devotional feelings awakened and their spirits refreshed.

Furthermore, no other professedly religious people on the face of the earth have higher, stronger reasons, urging them to the observance of family-devotion, than believers in Christian Universalism. Who have such views of the great family ties which bind us together as one race, and all to the one gracious God and Father? What other religion brings him nearer to his children? None! We say all this every time we assert the superiority of our faith—its theoretical perfectness, its practical excellency. Who then should go before us in the culture of the religious affections at home? Upon whose family-altars should there be brighter fires of adoration burning? If we are not among the number who have our homes consecrated by prayer and praise and religious instruction, where shall we look for homes where these manifestations are seen and known? The members of our homes are to meet and mingle in other family-circles than their own. And in some of these homes they will listen to the voice of prayer and praise, and be called to participate in Christian home-devotions. Shall they not be qualified, by previous home-examples, to hail and welcome these religious observances elsewhere;

or shall these be to them new scenes in home-life, which, from youth up, they have not witnessed beneath the otherwise goodly home-roofs that sheltered them? Shall they be led to ask the question, "Why are not these calls made upon us in our own families?" without being able to render an answer such as would meet the approval of Heaven? Or, shall they feel that these religious exercises in other homes are but the continuation of prayers and praises which, from day to day and from year to year, have blest them in their own?

What we want is, that our family religion should be just as rational and genuine as our other convictions and duties; that it should be a part of our family character, without which we should dishonor our family identity; that it should be a constituent part of our enjoyment of life, as much so as our nightly sleep or daily food. Let us so understand it, let others understand this of us, and our family devotions need not be otherwise than respected and blest. They will be a manifestation of the religion of him who made glad the homes of his friends,—who wept with the stricken family at Bethany, familiarly mingled with the guests at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and said to the humble

Zaccheus, so modestly wondering why this eminently holy one had honored his house with his presence, "This day is salvation come to thy house." So shall this religion double all the attractions of home, and send out from it, into a world of error and sin, the lights and hopes of the Gospel.

3. Let us note, also, the duty of religious instruction at home. This is as essential as that of reverent devotion. Indeed, they are inseparable. I fear it is too common among us, as with other sects, to depend for religious instruction too much upon the Sunday-school. But this institution, good as we may conceive or know it to be, can never take the place of home instruction.

Teach your children God's truth as you understand it. That is the word of duty coming to us all, in reference to the youthful souls of which we may have the guardianship. Said an aged minister of New England once: "Blessed is the memory of our mothers for their early religious instruction of their children and others committed to their care. The mother began their instruction early. She literally brought them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. I reverence and thank my mother for teaching me the Catechism. Though it is hard to be understood,

not fitting for babes, and in some parts erroneous, it was the best she knew ; and I thank her for teaching it, and my father for encouraging me to learn it. A deep reverence for God and for sacred things was imprinted on my mind, and I have no doubt of being a better man and better Christian for this instruction.”

We have a better word for our children and youth, and should see that they have it. And if they do,—in the religious earnestness and fidelity of the parents just referred to, in the spirit of our holy faith, there will come of this work fruits of holiness and everlasting life.

We need, then, a home church. The temple, the minister, the congregation, these are not all. In the quiet sanctity of home, every Christian parent may watch and tend a church. Says a late writer in the “London Inquirer” and his words are as true as beautiful :—

“ There are no sacraments which such a man cannot administer, from the baptism of the babe to the extreme unction of the dying. He may consecrate his own altar, and find his ordination in his own Christian heart, filled with the element which alone makes heaven a holy place. Home may be a church, because there may ever be offered a genuine Christian worship. But

this worship, to be genuine, must be the worship of love. It is easy to drill and discipline the young into an outward observance, which is hurtful to themselves, and worthless in the sight of the Parent Spirit. Whether the church meet before the time-honored shrine of a thousand years, or around the family-altar, there is no worship without love. But where can we find so fitting a place for the nurture of this divine element as the family? Its existence is essential to the very constitution of a Christian family, and without it we have only a social skeleton."

In answer to the question, How may the devotional life of the home be most effectually promoted? we answer briefly and emphatically —

1. By personal realization of its importance. This we are persuaded is too generally overlooked in the estimate made of religious duty. This is evinced in the apparent indifference to the subject or the neglect of it on the part of so many who are interested in the worship-services of the public sanctuary. The reasons already presented for attention to this duty of home-religious culture are not thoughtfully entertained and carefully weighed as they should be. When they are, we can have little doubt of the good results.

2. By a faithful presentation and enforcement of this subject on the part of our ministers, Sunday-school teachers, Theological schools, and Church journals. The life of the Church in connection with the home, or the culture of the reverential and devotional in the family, is as much a proper topic for the Christian pulpit as any other which can claim attention there. How many of our pastors make it a point to urge this duty home upon their hearers, as they do any other important interest in connection with Christian doctrine and practice? Perhaps more than we imagine; we hope so. But if the pulpit be delinquent in this respect, how can we expect a large interest in this work among the families of our congregations? In their intercourse with families of their charge, our pastors may properly commend this work, especially the use of the daily-worship manuals which can be so readily obtained. We have known such instances to operate favorably. The Christmas or birthday gift to some young man or woman, of one of our family-devotional books, has often been the occasion of its habitual use in the home. Such instances might be multiplied.

Our Theological schools may be instrumental

in the furtherance of this work. In the training of our new ministers there this interest cannot be wisely overlooked. It should be especially urged upon their attention as one of the indispensable assurances of the inward, permanent strength of our Church everywhere, and might very justly now and then be presented by our theological graduates in their public exercises.

Our Church journals should be more alive to this work,—their editors and correspondents. They may do much to promote it if they will. Brief articles in reference to it might oftener be seen in the columns of our weekly papers, and a good, sound, and thorough treatment of the subject, by some of our talented writers, might well grace the pages of the “Quarterly.”

In short, instruction in Christian truth, and consecration to its duties in the family, is so much added to that righteousness which must ever be the exaltation and safety of the state. He is one of the truest and noblest patriots, who is doing what he can to purify and Christianize the home.

SILENCE.

All great things are born of silence.

MARTINEAU.

SILENCE is one of the exquisite enjoyments and blessings to be realized in the midst of the Lord's works. The poet Young makes "silence and darkness solemn sisters, twins." Another poet, Moore, represents the throne of the Eternal Sovereign as "all light and silence." Both comparisons are equally expressive. The stillness of some deep forest shade in the hush of noon ; the sublime quiet in the midst of vast mountain scenery, far above and away from the world's "great Babel ;" the utterance of the ocean, which called forth this hymning of the lyrlist, —

" My choir shall be the moonlight waves,
When murmuring homeward to their caves,
Or when the stillness of the sea,
E'en more than music, speaks of Thee," —

all are inspirations such as silence awakens,— the silence in which He speaks whose thunder-tone voices can reach the remotest shores of creation. Well did the Psalmist exclaim, "The Lord is in his holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Silence is a sedative which most of us need in

the hurry and push and rush of the great busy world,—an occasion for thoughtful meditation now and then. Never did mankind and woman-kind need it more than now, when “What next?” is the hasty inquiry of the delving business-man and uneasy pleasure-hunter and skurrying tourist and insatiable reader of the latest issues of the press. Dullards talk of meditation and quiet,—not living spirits who belong to this age, who are “up with the times!” So the many falsely think and foolishly blunder. We have the heavenly privilege of being wiser if we will. After the soul’s swiftest flights and most prolonged conflicts, there will come a time when it will need most of all things rest, repose, silence, and contemplation. After all the world’s commotion, unrest, and distraction, there will be times when it must have peace in the assurance of a greater good accomplished. That remarkable passage in the Apocalypse is in agreement with this thought: “And there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour”¹ It is the close of a prolonged conflict of the heavenly and adverse powers. The groanings and travailings of the earth have ceased, its sorrows have ended, and God gives his people peace.

¹ Rev. viii. 1.

“O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men with wailing in your voices !
 O delvèd gold, the wailer’s heap !
O strife, O curse, that o’er it fall !
God strikes a silence through you all,
 And giveth his beloved sleep.”

The highest joy of the Christian is that of the peace within “that passeth understanding :” not stillness, merely, but the “expressive silence,” the inbreathing of a heavenly harmony, uplifting and delighting,—the consciousness of the Divine presence and approval, the “joy unspeakable,” that comes of the soul’s oneness with the loving and glorious Source of all good. Ah ! we are losers, all of us, if we fail to consider, or lightly esteem, this holy seeking and possession. Think of it !

In silence the most profound the highest confidence and joy of the spirit may be ours, as it was with him who said to his followers : “Ye will leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”¹ Silence and isolation from the earthly thus become a realization of the divine presence and life.

¹ John xvi. 32.





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